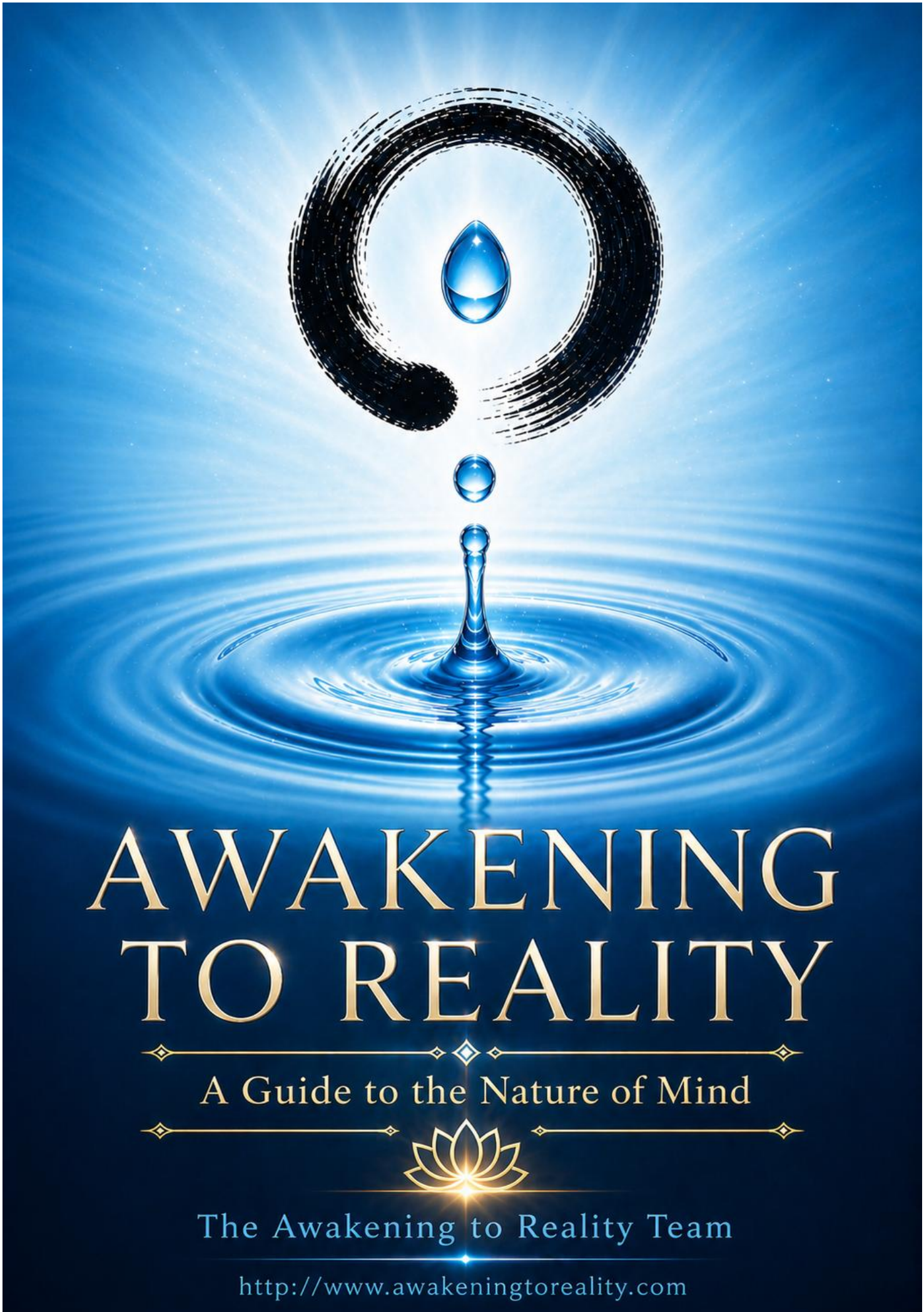
AWAKENING
TO REALITY
A Guide to the Nature of Mind
The Awakening to Reality Team
http://www.awakeningtoreality.com

Based on the materials of the Awakening to Reality Blog (a blog co-authored by John Tan and Soh Wei Yu) and the Awakening to Reality Discussion Group (**note: this group is now closed, however you can join to access the old discussions. It is a treasure trove of information.)**.

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"Life and death are of supreme importance. Time swiftly passes by and opportunity is lost. Each of us should strive to awaken. Awaken. Take heed, do not squander your life."

Dogen Zenji

"When you are struck by death's poison, nothing will be of any use. There is no time to tarry: quickly, meditate!
Do not be concerned with how you live in this life, subduing enemies and protecting your kin; be concerned with how you will die." – Zurchungpa's Testament

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface 6

Where to Start **13**

A Little Background Information **13**

The Original Text of John's Seven Stages of Enlightenment **18**

On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection **28**

Different Degrees of No-Self: Non-Doership, Non-dual, Anatta, Total Exertion and Dealing with Pitfalls **39**

Quick pointers for each stage **56**

Importance of View, Realization and Experience 66

Practice Guide and Commentary **86**

STAGE 1: I AM / Eternal Witness **88**

The realization: 88

Subphases in no particular order: 106

The experience: 106

How to Practice to Realize I AM 112

What the I AM Realization Is Not 173

Why Realize the I AM (Can I skip straight away to more "advanced stages" like anatta?) 179

Other Questions on Self-Enquiry and I AM 195

Complementary Practices to Self-Enquiry 216

Contemplative Practices to Focus On After I AM Realization 227

~ Four Aspects of I AM 227

~ Two Stanzas of Anatta 256

~ Two Types of Nondual Inquiry which leads to the collapse of perceiver/perceived duality 256

Samadhi (Meditative Absorption) 260

Pitfalls and Dangers of the I AM Phase 290

~ Reifying Host and Guest (An Unchanging Awareness) 290

~ Reifying a Universal Consciousness 298

~ Potential Sleep Disruptions 303

STAGE 2: I AM Everything **326**

STAGE 3: Entering into Nothingness **328**

STAGE 4: Presence as Mirror Bright Clarity **331**

The realization: 331

The experience: 333

One Mind 335

No Mind 336

Three Levels of Non-Dual 340

How to Progress from Stage 4 into Stage 5 340

The 90 Days Cycle 355

Pitfalls and Dangers of One Mind 365

STAGE 5: No Mirror Reflecting ("Anatta / No-Self / Firstfold Emptiness") **369**

Difference Between John Tan Stage 4 and John Tan Stage 5 442

Two Stanzas of Anatta and the Metaphors and Practices that Trigger Experiential Insight 445

A Conversation with Someone who Realized Anatta 482

Anatta and the Emptiness of Awareness is Not a Denial of Awareness/Clarity 488

Anatta is often misunderstood as mere non-doership, impersonality and subject-object non-division (wrong self-diagnosis!) 496

Luminous Presence may come at a later phase for a practitioner depending on conditions, Pellucid No-Self vs Non-Doership 506

I seem to be having some breakthroughs and insights into anatta but it is not so stable yet. 521

No Actor does not Imply No Action 522

Neo-Advaitic "No-Practice Doctrine" is Wrong and Unhelpful 531

No-Self is Not Associated with a State of No Thoughts 541

No-Self is Not Pre-Determinism 546

No-Self Does Not Imply Solipsism 556

The Lucknow Disease 572

Active No-Self vs Passive No-Self 577

Possible Dangers and Sidetracks of Stage 5 581

Mind-Body Drop 610

Anatta as Dispersing into Multiplicity + Spontaneous, Disjoint and Unsupported 620

Contemplative Practices to Focus On After Anatta 629

~ *Wisdom* 655

~ *Samadhi, Breathing and Meditation Practice* 688

~ *Mantra* 712

~ *Sky Gazing* 713

STAGE 6: The Nature of Presence is Empty ("Sunyata / Secondfold Emptiness") **714**

Conceptual and Dependent Designation 869

Causes Dependent on Effect (Two-way Dependency) 880

Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness 885

Nine Points on Anatta to Emptiness 885

Dependent Origination 886

General Principle of Dependent Origination 893

Inseparability of Awareness and Conditions 905

Afflictive Dependent Origination and the Death-Free (Not "The Deathless") 910

Freedom from the Four Extremes 945

+A and -A Emptiness (The Two Yogic Tastes of Emptiness) 948

~ *Total Exertion and Maha (+A)* 951

~ *The Practice of No Cold or Heat vs Total Exertion* 985

~ *Non-Arisen Nature of Phenomena (-A)* 986

~ *The Integration of Maha Total Exertion (+A) and Non-Arisen Nature of Phenomena (-A)* 989

Emptiness as Non-Conceptuality 1003

What emptiness is NOT 1023

Recognition of Appearances as One's Empty Radiance Clarity 1028

The Four Levels of "The Place Where There is No Heat and Cold" 1049

Wrong Understanding of Emptiness as Nihilism (Everything Doesn't Exist): 1057

STAGE 7: Presence is Spontaneously Perfected **1060**

~ Original Enlightenment/Nature/Liberation is a Wrong View 1085

~ Questions about Spontaneous Perfection 1094

Vipassana, John Tan's Style **1101**

Mindfulness of Breathing (Anapanasati) **1109**

Common Issues in Meditation **1119**

Inner Chatter 1120
Lethargy/Sleepiness 1120
Overcoming the Emotional Afflictions (aka. Kleshas, Samskaras, Vasanas) 1122
Compassion and Loving-Kindness 1160
Conduct, Ethics and the Paramitas (Perfections) 1170
Penetration of Wisdom into Sleep 1192
Tips on Energy Imbalances 1213
Health, Energy and Somatic Practices, Yoga and Diet 1259
Entering the Marketplace, Actualizing Daily Life 1280
Traditional Buddhist Attainments: Arahantship and Buddhahood 1292
Concluding notes 1344
On the Non-Linear and Non-Hierarchical Unfolding of Insights 1344
Other Writings by John Tan 1347
A Practice Summary 1347
Conclusion 1351
For Further Reading 1352
Glossary 1352
Book Recommendations and Practice Advise 1355
Appendix 1368
A Visual Diagram of John's Seven Stages 1368
Summary Table of the Seven Stages 1371

Preface

For an abridged (must shorter and concise) version of this AtR guide, refer to https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/06/the-awakening-to-reality-practice-guide.html

This is a practice manual to realize and actualize the nature of mind through the combined effort of the Awakening to Reality team. Unless stated otherwise, the commentaries including this preface are written by Soh. This guide is written based on John Tan's Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment. The original text will be shown in the next pages, followed by a commentary for each stage. However, it should be noted that the following phases of insights may

not unfold in the same exact and linear way for everyone. It is also not hierarchical, and it is not a measurement of importance - even the first phase of realization is very important and precious. (See chapter: On the Non-Linear and Non-Hierarchical Unfolding of Insights)

It is important to understand that reading these information alone will not by itself bring about the benefits one finds in actual enlightenment/awakening. Awakening is experiential realization and completely beyond the realm of intellectual understanding. The difference is like night and day, analogous to memorizing a restaurant menu versus actually eating the meal. An intellectual understanding can be a good semblance of reality and be a good forerunner to true contemplative insights, however one must be very honest with oneself and not fall into the mistake of mistaking a conceptual understanding for direct realization. I have unfortunately witnessed more than one person over the past decade that have tragically mistaken themselves to be realised after reading the AtR materials. They are only having glimpses of experiences - not realization - and thought themselves to be realized after having a little intellectual grasp of AtR materials. It is easy to deceive oneself of being realized when one has not. Parroting learnt wisdom is not a sign of wisdom actualized. One has to look at oneself honestly, how is one living one's life, am I living life in its utter purity and perfection? Can I honestly say that life as experienced in this very moment is perfection and purity, the best that life can give and is always giving freely? Is this moment sullied by any identity, grasping of self/Self, any holding back from complete openness to the utter fullness of life? Then the real test is in the "marketplace", in truly living one's life in complete freedom and peace while engaging in the daily encounters of people, things and events, not in armchair philosophizing and conceptualizing about the meaning of life. As John Tan pointed out, by posting so much information about awakening, I can at times do certain people a disservice by providing them with ample information that they churn into an intellectual knowledge in disguise and mimicry of real wisdom and freedom. Yet it is my hope that these words can serve as pointers -- not as signposts to be collected and hung on one's wall as a decoration, or made into a dogma or belief, but merely as guidance and pointers to one's destination, which is none other than the immediate nature of mind/universe actualized.

Personally, I can say from direct experience that direct realization is completely direct, immediate, and non-intellectual, it is the most direct and intimate taste of reality beyond the realm of imagination. It far exceeds one's expectations and is far superior to anything the mind can ever imagine or dream of. It is utter freedom. Can you imagine living **every** moment in purity and perfection **without effort**, where grasping at identity does not take hold, where there is not a trace or sense of 'I' as a seer, feeler, thinker, doer, be-er/being, an agent, a 'self' entity residing inside the body somewhere relating to an outside world, and what shines forth and stands out in the absence of a 'self' is a very marvellous, wondrous, vivid, alive world that is full of intense vividness, joy, clarity, vitality, and an intelligence that is operating as every spontaneous action (there is no sense of being a doer), where any bodily actions, speech and thoughts are just as spontaneous as heart beating, fingernails growing, birds singing, air moving gently, breath flowing, sun shining - there is no distinction between 'you are doing action'/'you are living' and 'action is being done to you'/'you are being lived' (as there is simply no 'you' and 'it' - only total and boundless spontaneous presencing).

This is a world where nothing can ever sully and touch that purity and perfection, where the whole of universe/whole of mind is always experienced vividly as that very purity and perfection devoid of any kind of sense of self or perceiver

whatsoever that is experiencing the world at a distance from a vantagepoint -- life without 'self' is a living paradise free of afflictive/painful emotions (note: I am not proclaiming a state of Buddhahood or Arahantship where all traces of mental afflictions are totally obliterated, see this link https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/07/buddhahood-end-of-all-emotionalmental.html , and Traditional Buddhist Attainments: Arahantship and Buddhahood in this AtR guide for more details), where every color, sound, smell, taste, touch and detail of the world stands out as the very boundless field of pristine awareness, sparkling brilliance/radiance, colorful, high-saturation, HD, luminous, heightened intensity and shining wonderment and magicality, where the surrounding sights, sounds, scents, sensations, smells, thoughts are seen and experienced so clearly down to the tiniest details, vividly and naturally, not just in one sense door but all six, where the world is a fairy-tale like wonderland, revealed anew every moment in its fullest depths as if you are a new-born baby experiencing life for the first time, afresh and never seen before, where life is abundant with peace, joy and fearlessness even amidst the apparent chaos and troubles of life, and everything experienced through all the senses far surpasses any beauty previously experienced, as if the universe is like heaven made of glittering gold and jewels, experienced in complete gapless directness without separation, where life and the universe is experienced in its intense lucidity, clarity, aliveness and vivifying presence not only without intermediary and separation but without center and boundaries - infinitude as vast as an endless night sky is actualized every moment, an infinitude that is simply the vast universe appearing as an empty, distanceless, dimensionless and powerful presencing, where the mountains and stars on the horizon stands out no more distant than one's breath, and shines forth as intimately as one's heartbeat, where the cosmic scale of infinitude is actualized even in ordinary activities as the entirety of the universe is always participating as every ordinary activity including walking and breathing and one's very body (without a trace of an 'I' or 'mine') is as much the universe/dependent origination in action and there is nothing outside of this boundless exertion/universe, where the purity and infinitude of the marvellous world experienced through being cleansed in all doors of perception is constant. (*If the **doors of perception** were **cleansed** every thing would appear to man as it is: **Infinite**. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.* - William Blake)

You know all the Mahayana Sutras (e.g. Vimalakirti Sutra), old Zen talks about seeing this very earth as pure land and all the Vajrayana talks about the point of tantra as the pure vision of seeing this very world, body, speech and mind in its primordial unfabricated purity as the Buddha field, palace, mandala, mantra and deity? Now you truly get it, you realise everything is really just like that when experienced in its primordial purity and perfection, and that the old sages have not been exaggerating at all. It is as much a literal and precise description of the state of consciousness as it is a metaphor. As I told John Tan before, Amitabha Sutra's description of pure land resembles my living experience here and now. "To me it just means anatta. When what's seen, tasted, touched, smelled are in clean purity, everywhere is pure land." - John Tan, 2019. "If one is free from background self, all manifestations appear in clean purity in taste. Impurities from what I know come from mental constructions." – John Tan, 2020

This is a freedom that is free from any artificially constructed boundaries and limitations. And yet, this boundlessness does not in any way lead to the dissociation from one's body, instead one feels more alive than ever as one's very body, one grows ever more somatic, at home and intimate as one's body. This is not a body normally conceived of, as the boundaries of an artificially solidified body that stands separated from the universe, dissolve into energetic streams of aliveness dancing and pulsating throughout the body in high energy and pleasure, as well as sensations of foot steps,

movement, palm touching an object, where the body is no longer conflated with a constructed boundary of 'inside' and 'outside', 'self' or 'other', where no trace of an 'inside' and an 'outside' can be found in one's state of consciousness - there's only one indivisible, boundless and measureless world/mind - only this infinitude of a dynamic and seamlessly interconnected dance that we call 'the universe'. This is better than any passing peak experiences be they arisen spontaneously, in meditation or through the use of psychedelic substances. And yet, despite experiencing life to it fullest every moment without any veils, in complete openness and utter nakedness, nothing gains a foothold in consciousness, for as vivid as they are, they leave no trace just as a bird leaves no tracks in the sky, an empty and lucid display such as a gust of wind and the glittery reflections of moon on the ocean waves - appearing but nothing 'there' or anywhere. All these words and descriptions I just wrote came very easily and spontaneously in a very short time as I am simply describing my current state of experience that is experienced every moment. I am not being poetic here but simply being as direct and clear as possible about what is immediately experienced. And this is only a figment that I am describing. If I were to tell you more of what this is like, you would not believe it. But once you enter this gateless realm you shall see that words always pale in comparison.

So forget about memorizing and parroting these words. Simply go contemplate, meditate and practice to gain these insights for yourself, then you can easily come up with better words than me and share them with the world. When words genuinely come from your lived experience and realization, they signify something beyond mere second-hand verbiage, and shine with authenticity. As John Tan said in 2020, "That is what I want you to do and express. He didn't even use a single word like anatta or total exertion. Really talk out of direct authentic experience, clear and right to the point. So you must also do that. Don't keep repeating same thing... anatta, total exertion and emptiness.... be creative and open up to new expressions."

However you should understand that the experience I described above, which is what I am experiencing on a daily basis all the time, can only come about via direct realization of the nature of mind. Even after direct realization of the nature of mind, it will almost certainly take several years for the awakening to mature. I can say that my depth of awakening has matured by a lot from my initial awakening in 2010, and I am still having breakthroughs this year 2019. Anyone who has an initial awakening and think it is final, or equivalent to a Buddha or Arahant's level of attainment is seriously deluded. As Kyle Dixon said in 2013, "99% of individuals require integration and familiarization. The non-gradual individuals [cig car ba's] are said to be as rare as stars in the day time, and the Dalai Lama attests that there hasn't been a cig car ba for centuries." The Advaitin teacher Vishrant also said, "the teachers that are flying in and out and telling people they are awake are actually misleading people. The terrible side of that is when somebody is told they are awake, the ego grasps it and says, 'I am awake', and then stop seeking, and then these people stop looking because they think they've already found. So it cuts off their chances for ongoing awakening. It's very sad."

To realize the nature of mind is not the same as having temporary and fleeting peak experiences of what I have described above. Having a peak experience is common and can come about in various ways, sometimes spontaneously. You may even (and many/most people do at some point of their lives - although most have forgotten and may need time to recall) have several glimpses of the perfection and purity that I describe above, absent of any sense of self whatsoever. Even having mere glimpses will be good, because at least then, you know from personal experience that I'm not just

bullshitting here, that this is all truly possible and your confidence in this is born out of your direct experience and not based merely on some fickle blind faith in the reports of others. Even then, doubts can still creep back in when the sense of self returns, and from that (deluded) perspective, the paradise one has experienced before seems like a distant and hazy dream, rather than a vividly lived reality. To have the experience that I described become a natural state 24/7 requires thorough realisation. Direct realisation, which is far more important than simply having experiences, comes with a doubtless certainty that will never be lost. This guide should hopefully make clear the importance and difference between view, realization and experience.

Some of you may think what I described sounds too good to be true, and probably before my awakening I would have thought that all these are the stuff of pipe dreams and fairy tales. From the perspective of being a delusory separate self cut off from the infinitude, all these surely seem like a distant dream. From the perspective of truth, there is only perfection and purity abound, no doubts about it - it is a direct taste that hits you like a powerful blast of arctic air, except it is actually the entire luminous and empty universe that 'hits you' without any trace of a 'you', utterly obvious and undeniable. You will know what I mean when you're actualizing it. Some practitioners who have purportedly gained certain awakening seem to imply that enlightenment is a kind of let down. I do not know what their experience, level or depth of enlightenment is, but that is wrong and has simply not been the case for me. They haven't plumbed the depths. In reality, truth and freedom is beyond one's wildest dreams. I can assure you that this is not fantasy, and I wish that you would see it for yourself and be free.

This is a very lengthy guide, but do not fear or be overwhelmed by the amount of information. If you can follow through to the end that'll be great (though I suspect that at least half or more of the readers won't have that patience or time or willingness to do so), otherwise I would recommend at least reading through the chapters **The Original Text of John's Seven Stages of Enlightenment** and **On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection** to get an overall picture of the path, then take a very pragmatic approach and focus more on the more practical portions/chapters in this guide pertaining to where you are at or where you want to be (e.g. focus on the I AM and self-enquiry chapter if you are seeking Self-Realization, or focus on the commentary on Stage 4 and 5 if you are figuring out the difference between non-dual and anatta or trying to realise anatta, etc), and glance through the other chapters to see if you find anything helpful or relevant to your practice now. Perhaps in future when you read this guide again you will understand more and find other relevant things that previously didn't "click", so don't worry or get stuck somewhere if you feel that there's something which doesn't make sense to you or that there's something which you can't understand well at this point in time. That's what happened to me anyway, and I'm sure for everybody else as well - when I read through my old conversations with John Tan and other Buddhist texts, things said and verses that didn't make sense in the past suddenly becomes as clear as day at a later point due to the maturation in insight, experience and practice. Don't expect to understand everything the first time, and you don't have to. Spirituality is not about an intellectual knowledge, it is essentially a direct realization, experience, actualization of our true nature and a transmutation of consciousness.

The point of this guide is to serve as a guide, and so if it serves to point you in the right direction to your next step, that itself might be good enough, just like it is not necessary to memorise all the signposts in your city - you just need to see

or utilize the correct signpost at the correct location, time and situation. Having a thousand signposts in the city is a good thing - that means in every location, the citizen does not get lost no matter where he/she is. But that does not mean that all the thousand signposts need to be grasped all at once, or memorised, nor does the citizen need to get overwhelmed by all the different signposts. The signposts just serves a functional purpose, that's all. The guide is not for the purpose of creating a heady intellectual and conceptual model of what reality is, nor is it like a school or academic textbook for memorising and answering questions at examinations. It is also not meant for intellectual curiosity or gathering of information like a kind of research. That is like being handed the key to paradise but tossing it to the bin instead. Spirituality is about your life, it is about your own existence, it must be something very alive and intimate. You will eventually find out the truth for yourself through your own experience and practice.

Lastly, I want to emphasize that the crucial takeaway from "Awakening to Reality" is to have clarity on the view, realization and experience. The point is not to see the "7 stages" as a form of attainment (although in some sense it may be seen that way and be conventionally true, I generally don't see it in terms of attainment but in terms of View, Realization and Experience). Perhaps it would be more useful to see them as facets of our true nature, various aspects which can be revisited and deepened endlessly, a point made in the chapter *On the Non-Linear and Non-Hierarchical Unfolding of Insights*. As a matter of fact, the seventh stage stressed that it should be understood as ongoing "practice enlightenment" rather than a static finality. The emphasis in "Awakening to Reality" is on understanding, distinguishing, awakening and integrating **view, experience** and **realization**. Without clarity on this, there will be obstructions. Too many practitioners emphasize on certain aspects - such as skewing to experience only, or on the view only, for example. There is the failure to discern and integrate these aspects, hence John Tan is always emphasizing on this point. This will be explained in the chapter *Importance of View, Realization and Experience*.

Foreword by Soh for Nafis's AtR Practice Guide

Note: The following Foreword was not written for this document, but for the much shorter AtR Practice Guide at https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/06/the-awakening-to-reality-practice-guide.html. I just wanted to add it here to emphasize the important for dedicated meditation and contemplative practice.

"I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Nafis Rahman for his great effort in creating The Awakening to Reality Practice Guide. This guide is a compilation of essential pointers and contemplative exercises, mostly derived (although not entirely) from the much larger Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind written by myself and the AtR Team. This Practice Guide is a much-needed, concise version of the original AtR Guide, which has become too lengthy (over 1000 pages) and potentially off-putting to readers. After a meticulous review, I've made only minimal edits to this streamlined version.

Nafis Rahman, who has underwent rather similar insights in his own path, recognized the need for a more accessible guide. With his dedication and compassion, this guide was born, and I believe it will be an indispensable tool for countless readers on their spiritual journey. It is my hope that this practice guide will aid in the awakening of great numbers of fellow spiritual practitioners in the future.

However, I would like to highlight a crucial aspect that seems underemphasized in both this Practice Guide and the longer AtR guide: the two additional trainings of Samadhi [meditative composure] and Shila [conduct]. These, along with Prajna [wisdom], form the three pillars of the path to liberation. While they might be discussed in the longer AtR guide and more extensively in other resources, their significance is undeniable. Meditation also pairs well with inquiry. For instance, during an hour-long meditation session along with self-inquiry in February 2010, I experienced a deep realization of I AM. This commitment to daily practice of sitting meditation is shared by John Tan, who dedicates 2-3 hours or more daily even today. However, for those finding prolonged sessions challenging, even 30 or 45 minutes daily can be transformative.

Having the discipline to sit daily is important, even though Samadhi should eventually go beyond the sessions of sitting and should equally be integrated into movement, especially with maturity of insight. One should not come under the wrong understanding, however, that Samadhi or meditation practice becomes unimportant after attaining certain realizations. Even after the realization of anatta, it is important to maintain a daily practice of Samadhi and have quality time to meditate. For more information, I recommend the following resources: Universally Recommended Instructions (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2016/05/universally-recommended-instructions.html) and Mindfulness of Breathing: Anapanasati Sutta (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/mindfulness-of-breathing-anapanasati.html). The right meditation posture and technique are vital, and guidance from an awakened spiritual teacher (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/01/finding-awakened-spiritual-teacher-and.html and https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/02/teachers-who-realised-anatta.html) can be invaluable. Videos online such as Rinzai Zen at Korinji (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/12/rinzai-zen-at-korinji-why-do-we-sit-in.html) may also be useful.

Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith wrote, “Samadhi/dhyāna is a natural mental factor, we all have it. The problem is that we naturally allow this mental factor to rest on afflictive objects such as HBO, books, video games, etc. Śamatha practice is the discipline of harnessing our natural predisposition for concentration, and shifting it from afflictive conditioned phenomena to nonafflictive conditioned phenomena, i.e., the phenomena of the path. We do this to create a well-tilled field for the growth of vipaśyāna. Śamatha ultimately allows us to have mental stability and suppresses afflictive mental factors so that we may eventually give rise to authentic insight into the nature of reality. While it is possible to have vipaśyāna without cultivating śamatha, it is typically quite unstable and lacks the power to effectively eradicate afflictive patterning from our minds. Therefore, the basis of all practice in Buddhadharma, from Abhidharma to the Great Perfection, is the cultivation of śamatha as a preliminary practice for germination of vipaśyāna.”

And why is right conduct important? It is conducive to a mind free from regrets and remorse, and a more stable and clear mind free from ill will or intentions, hatred, greed, and other mental afflictions. This is a requirement for the development of meditative joy and composure of samadhi, which supports the development and maturation of wisdom. This, along with the cultivation of positive mental factors like loving kindness, compassion and generosity, will help to dissolve mental afflictions like selfishness, anger, egoity and develop positive mental factors that can be supportive of the development of samadhi and wisdom. For an in-depth exploration of the three trainings, Geoff’s Measureless Mind

(PDF) is an excellent resource: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/09/great-resource-of-buddha-teachings.html

For clarity, content in the first person below is primarily extracted from the AtR guide, penned by me, Soh. Explicit attributions are made for quotations from John Tan."

Where to Start

If you haven't already, first refer to the Awakening to Reality blog and go through the 'Must Reads'. Next, reading the free E-Books is highly recommended:

- Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind
- Soh's Journal and Notes on Spiritual Awakening

This document is intended as a supplementary practice guide for those who are already familiar with the ATR stages (see below)

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2014/07/insight-diagnosis-simplified_11.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/11/beyond-awareness.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/12/experience-realization-view-practice_16.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/08/substantial-and-insubstantial-non_6.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/04/different-degress-of-no-self-non.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/08/insight-buddhism-reconsideration-of.html (recommended reading: https://www.reddit.com/r/streamentry/comments/igored/insight_buddhism_a_reconsideration_of_the_meaning/)

A Little Background Information

A somewhat edited reply to - https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=77&t=32103&p=506936#p506936 - Someone wrote, "...In addition he *[Soh]* stands out as compared to some of the other people making similar claims *[to enlightenment]* - Daniel Ingram, Shinzen Young etc. - in that he has highly experienced, traditional Dharma students taking him seriously. Personally I was quite surprised to find it, but on his facebook groups for example you will find people from here, and elsewhere, who are long term practitioners and students of respected teachers, very well

educated in the tantras and philosophy, and certainly not the type to typically believe quacks. So make of it what you may, I still don't know what to make of it myself yet... "

Soh: "Actually I have great respect for Daniel Ingram. He trained in a serious vipassana lineage and his realisation was confirmed and was asked to teach by Sayadaw U. Pandita Jr., and hence I think that he is a rather authoritative teacher despite the controversies for using the title "arahant" to describe himself *(Britanicca: Alternative Titles:* ***arahant****, rakan. Arhat, (Sanskrit: "one who is worthy"), Pali* ***arahant****, in Buddhism, a perfected person, one who has gained insight into the true nature of existence and has achieved nirvana (spiritual enlightenment).)*. (Update: Daniel's path of practice is more gradual and not necessarily the one I followed. However, his book Mastering the Core Teachings of the Buddha: An Unusually Hardcore Dharma Book (Second Edition Revised and Expanded) contains many dharma gems and I would definitely recommend giving it a read, even if it is not a completely similar path. Interestingly, Daniel Ingram was impressed by "Thusness" (John Tan in my AtR blog, my mentor), and also said in an interview that he considered "Thusness" to be an arahant.

That being said, I/we do not agree that his term "arahant" necessarily coincides with the scriptural definition completely, although John Tan has also spoken positively of Daniel Ingram's insight and realisation. Like Daniel, we no longer experience subject/object duality or agency, and our practice has led us to become generally free from the five poisons (emotional afflictions - see chapter on *Overcoming the Emotional Afflictions*). Nonetheless, John Tan/Thusness and I do not make claims to Arahantship nor Buddhahood. To keep this section short, further elaborations can be found towards the end of this document under the chapter *Traditional Buddhist Attainments: Arahantship and Buddhahood.* That being said, Daniel has his reasons for proclaiming attainments - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qdQFvJtPpf0 which I see as a valid point.

The John Tan 7 stages model was written in 2006 specifically for someone from Canada that he knew was ripe for certain breakthroughs (which I later reposted in my blog). True enough, that Canadian had a breakthrough just by reading the stages that John wrote then. The 7 stages are based on experiential insights for the purpose of pointing out the subtle points regarding the nature of mind. It is not written for the purpose of claiming that one is an Arahant, Buddha or whatever stage of enlightenment. John Tan had indicated before that he would rather not be associated with the traditional four paths or bhumi system. We would rather not map the John Tan 7 stages model unnecessarily to other maps of enlightenment (it can be complex, messy, controversial, speculative, and perhaps not very fruitful) or create unnecessary controversies. Although I have informally commented on Mahamudra and Zen maps before, John Tan and I would also prefer not to compare unnecessarily. Furthermore, we are not in a position of teaching, we are not teachers, we do not have students, nor does our limited time as busy laypersons permit for such an endeavor, nor are we even interested in taking up the burden of 'teaching', nor are we authoritative figures representing any particular school or lineage, although it is true that in the past, multiple authoritative Zen and other masters and teachers have sought for John Tan's/AtR's guidance and more than one of them broke through to anatta realisation such as A Zen Exploration of the Bahiya Sutta - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/ ... sutta.html. However, John Tan has no wish to take up the role of teaching, and told me not to portray him/us as 'teachers', although he also said that the AtR project has the potential to "be good" or be of benefit to others.

I have also stated previously that I am not into teaching or portraying myself as a guru. Besides my busy life, I agree with the approach of Daniel Ingram's forum Dharma Overground that promotes "the spirit of mutual, supportive adventurers on the path rather than rigid student-teacher relationships and the notion that the collective wisdom of a group of strong practitioners at various stages and from various traditions and backgrounds is often better than following one guru-type.", and Greg Goode has also written well in his article From the Age of the Guru to the Age of the Friend - https://greg-goode.com/article/from-the-age-of-the-guru-to-the-age-of-the-friend/. (Update 2024: I'm not sure I would have quoted Daniel's advice about not following a guru nowadays. I believe that following a teacher can be beneficial and important for people, although the challenge lies in finding a deeply awakened guru. Relying on fellow practitioners to guide each other can often be misleading, akin to the blind leading the blind, as we frequently observe today.) In my experience, gurus can be helpful or even play an important role in one's spiritual development, but it is better not to restrict one's learning to any particular person - it is good to go deep (into one's path and practice) but also learn widely from various people, things and situations. This is not a discouragement from finding a guru or teacher, just to be clear, as I clearly learnt a lot from John Tan (who does not like to be portrayed as a teacher so I call him my 'mentor') and other teachers. If you are searching for a guru, read this article by Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith: https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/bphtb5/acarya_malcolm_smith_addresses_misconceptions_in/. (Update 2024: Do read Finding An Awakened Spiritual Teacher and Mentor - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/01/finding-awakened-spiritual-teacher-and.html and Teachers who Realised Anatta - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/02/teachers-who-realised-anatta.html) However, ultimately, the whole universe and the whole of life should become one's teacher. In contributing to AtR my aim is not to establish myself as a guru, but to share what I think is helpful, as I find that AtR has become a source of inspiration and spiritual breakthroughs for many over time. As of now - Year 2019, about 11 years after the AtR blog was first established, more than 30 people (updated, 2020: more than 40+ now. Update: 2022: more than 50+ now.) from all over the world have realised at least anatta/John Tan Stage 5 (and further...) through encountering the Awakening to Reality blog, Soh or John Tan. (Their insights arose not from physically encountering us but by contemplating the AtR materials that we wrote online or advised, the majority of whom are not from Singapore. Although, a couple of us Singaporeans that attained similar realisations through AtR have casually met up a few times after the realisations)

Why am I mentioning that so many people have awakened? Partly because I think this brings the lofty ideals of "awakening" from the realm of stories and myths back to earth. It's the tangible, normal folks like you and me, who achieve awakening, and there are probably more than you think there are. I can assure you that I am a very ordinary person, certainly no more special than you or the guy/girl next door, although due to my awakening I am certainly more joyous and peaceful in character than prior awakening, and friends have commended me on this. But otherwise I don't think people around me will even suspect that I had some kind of special awakening unless they truly inquire into my life. (Reminds me that there was a monk who, not knowing that the person he just met at a potter's workshop was in fact the Buddha himself, addressed him as a "friend" and informed him that he was actually trying to find the Buddha. The Buddha just played along - not revealing his identity, while he proceeded to give the monk an entire

discourse on dharma before the monk finally realised that the person in front of him was actually the Buddha himself. I am not trying to compare myself to Buddha, but simply suggesting that awakenings need not manifest as halos on the head or some special and obvious 'vibes' that everyone can pick up from a mile away) I don't wear special robes or funny hats, I talk normally with others and not in some slow motion trance-inducing tone and tempo, I am by no means some 108th reincarnated avatar of the luminous king of Vishnu, so I am just like any other ordinary folk wandering in the marketplace. To quote Zen Master Hakuin, "Is he an ordinary man? Is he a sage? The evil ones and the heretics cannot discern him. Even the buddhas and the patriarchs cannot lay their hands upon him. Were anyone to try to indicate his mind, [it would be no more there than] the horns of a rabbit or the hairs of a tortoise that have gone beyond the farthest mountain." That's how I'm like, living a life of cosmic immensity and release in the ordinary. Everything seems the same as before, yet different, because a life where 'me' and 'mine' is absent is a very wonderful life indeed. As John Tan said, "the ordinary life when free from compartmentalization is exactly where and when the search ends and what comes after is a human life that is free and full of wonder and amazement".

So the point is that we should not have wrong ideas that awakening is only found in some remote regions of the Himalayas, that it is something totally out of the realm of the ordinary and that it necessarily requires remaining in an altered state of consciousness or trance for hours and hours at a time, or that it is the arena of some special adept ascetics meditating day and night for 12 years, etc. Examples were given in "The Supreme Source: The Fundamental Tantra of Dzogchen Semde Kunjed Gyalpo" of how some of the Dzogchen masters were prostitutes who nevertheless awakened through receiving intimate pith instructions from their masters, and those who became awakened came from all walks of life. Furthermore the Zen teachings always emphasize how spirituality or spiritual awakening is never separate from the mundane and ordinary life of "chop wood, carry water". And Kunjed Gyalpo tells us, "Seek the location of the heart essence through phenomena that derive from it and come to appreciate it through the skillful means of not conceptualizing in any way whatsoever. Since the heart essence occurs naturally, dharmakaya is not elsewhere." Nirvana is after-all, samsara rightly seen. It is never about separating yourself or becoming distant and aloof from the nitty gritty of daily lives but rather, the complete gapless/undivided engagement and spontaneous living where even the term 'intimacy' no longer quite apply (who is being intimate with what?)

Awakening is our birthright, our buddha-nature (potentiality for awakening) is never sealed off from anyone nor is it ever the province of an elite group of people. For as Guru Padmasambhava also stated, "If he practices, then even a cowherd can realize liberation. Even though he does not know the explanation, he can systematically establish himself in the experience of it." So as I told others before, you must trust in your own capacity. If ordinary folks like me can get it done, then so can you.

Spiritual awakening used to be relegated to great yogis residing in far off remote places very distant from the lives of ordinary city folks, such that most people will never believe that it is accessible or relevant to the ordinary lay people like you and me. I believe this perception or stereotype will certainly change as time passes.

Technology creates possibilities that have never existed before, bridging thousands of miles to foster exchanges between supportive adventurers on the path. These digital spaces have become gathering grounds for dedicated

practitioners from diverse stages, traditions, and backgrounds, creating fertile soil for cross-cultural discussion and deeper understanding. Complementing this technological shift is a cultural one: a growing number of teachers and practitioners are embracing radical transparency. They are openly sharing their insights and experiences of awakening, actively dismantling the taboos and historical dogmas that once shrouded the topic.

In contrast, people living just 50 or 100 years ago aren't nearly as connected to others today, and genuine spiritual teachers (much less truly attained and realized spiritual masters) and teachings and fellowships may be limited to certain localities and may be hard to come by. For example, Zen Master Dogen had to travel to China from Japan - a tremendously dangerous feat as sailing in 13th century was dangerous and many who embarked on such a journey had perished, and even then he could not find a master that could awaken him when he reached China. Almost giving up and about to return to Japan, he was so fortunate that at the last moment someone told him about Zen Master Rujing, and by learning from him Dogen attained great awakening. Without meeting the person who introduced Zen Master Rujing, Dogen may not have awakened at all and Japan would not have the Soto Zen of today. Dogen has also said that before him, there were no masters that was truly awakened in Japan, and he could tell based on the writings, expression and behaviours of past masters. So this is how rare and difficult it is to come by a truly enlightened master in the past. Today, a truly realized spiritual master may be a Skype call away even if he/she lives in another country. Nowadays, you can also have an equivalent of Nalanda library available through a mouse-click away, or the entire Buddhist canon available on your iPad, thanks also to translators at foundations like 84000.co. Also, as John Tan commented before, many practitioners in the olden times may not have very strong view due to the lack of easy access to written spiritual texts or scriptures (even though they may be very dedicated, disciplined and sincere, perhaps more so than modern day people). This can have implications on the swiftness of our spiritual progress. So consider ourselves to be extremely fortunate.

More people are now able to read up and get connected with spiritual resources and fellowships with the help of an open internet which brings entire libraries of information to their fingertips. This is certainly not a replacement for a face-to-face spiritual community or teacher which always remains important and most valuable, but at least more people are becoming aware and have a huge resource available to their aid and have more directions. And it is with the aid of technology, the spread of information through online media, and the support of online communities like the Awakening to Reality Discussion Group **(note: this group is now closed, however you can join to access the old discussions. It is a treasure trove of information.)** that enables so many people from across the world to awaken.

May the growing awareness of this potentiality - the innate potentiality to awaken to our true nature, spread like wildfire in time to come for the benefit of all sentient beings. And may technology continue to evolve and become an even greater aid for our spiritual advancements.

I am grateful to have received teachings from several lineages: Sōtō Zen through Peter (Genjo) Bruza; Rencheng Buddhism through Li Zhu Laoshi (a new school founded by Venerable Master Shen Kai, tracing its lineage to Linji Chán); and Dzogchen through Ācārya Malcolm Smith.

However, my most profound influence has been my interactions with John Tan since 2004. I consider him my main teacher. Below is a self-description he shared regarding his background as a layman in the finance industry and his spiritual history from Soh's e-journal: "I am in the finance and investment industries serving as independent/non-executive directors (sort of watchdog) for some listed companies in Singapore. As for practice, I was initially under the guidance of a Taoist teacher (Gao Shang Tze) in Taiwan but later took my refuge under the Holiness Sakya Trizin. However in actual case, I am a lay practitioner and a non-sectarian. I had my experience of no-dog aka "I AM" at the age of 17 and after the next 25 years is just its unfolding from non-dual to spontaneous perfection." - John Tan, post on Dharma Overground v1, 2009

The Original Text of John's Seven Stages of Enlightenment

Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html
(Soh: This article was written by my teacher who goes by the online moniker "Thusness"/"PasserBy" *[John Tan]*. I have personally gone through these phases of realizations myself since then.)

For Chinese version, see Chinese Translation of Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/p/chinese-translation-of.html) - offers to improve this translation or help out in other translation works will be much appreciated.

NOTE: The stages are nothing authoritative, merely for sharing purposes. The article On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection is a good reference for these 7 phases of experience. The original six stages of experience has been updated to seven stages of experience, with the addition of 'Stage 7: Presence is Spontaneously Perfected' for readers to understand that seeing the nature of reality as the ground of all experiences which is Always So, is important for effortlessness to take place.

Based on:
http://buddhism.sgforums.com/?action=thread_display&thread_id=210722&page=3

Comments below are by John unless explicitly stated to be from Soh.

(First written: 20th September 2006, Last Updated by John: 27th August 2012, Last Updated by Soh: 22nd January 2019)

Stage 1: The Experience of "I AM"

It was about 20 years back and it all started with the question of "Before birth, who am I?" I do not know why but this question seemed to capture my entire being. I could spend days and nights just sitting focusing, pondering over this question; till one day, everything seemed to come to a complete standstill, not even a single thread of thought arose. There was merely nothing and completely void, only this pure sense of existence. This mere sense of I, this Presence, what was it? It was not the body, not thought as there was no thought, nothing at all, just Existence itself. There was no need for anyone to authenticate this understanding.

At that moment of realization, I experienced a tremendous flow of energy being released. It was as if life was expressing itself through my body and I was nothing but this expression. However at that point in time, I was still unable to fully understand what this experience was and how I had misunderstood its nature.

Comments by Soh: This is also the First Stage of the Five Ranks of Tozan Ryokai (a Zen Buddhism map of awakening), called "The Apparent within the Real". This phase can also be described as an oceanic Ground of Being or Source devoid of the sense of individuality/personal self, described here by John in 2006:

"Like a river flowing into the ocean, the self dissolves into nothingness. When a practitioner becomes thoroughly clear about the illusory nature of the individuality, subject-object division does not take place. A person experiencing "AMness" will find "AMness in everything". What is it like?

Being freed from individuality -- coming and going, life and death, all phenomenon merely pop in and out from the background of the AMness. The AMness is not experienced as an 'entity' residing anywhere, neither within nor without; rather it is experienced as the ground reality for all phenomenon to take place. Even in the moment of subsiding (death), the yogi is thoroughly authenticated with that reality; experiencing the 'Real' as clear as it can be. We cannot lose that AMness; rather all things can only dissolve and re-emerges from it. The AMness has not moved, there is no coming and going. This "AMness" is God.

Practitioners should never mistake this as the true Buddha Mind! "I AMness" is the pristine awareness. That is why it is so overwhelming. Just that there is no 'insight' into its emptiness nature." (Excerpt from Buddha Nature is NOT "I Am")

Soh: To realize I AM, the most direct method is Self-Inquiry, asking yourself 'Who am I?' See: The Direct Path to Your Real Self, self-inquiry chapter in Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my free e-book, and other self-inquiry book recommendations in Book Recommendations 2019 and Practice Advices or these youtube videos:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCrWn_NueUg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=783GbeforeKbzGY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymvj01q44o0
https://youtu.be/BA8tDzK_kPI

Do note that very often, one is having glimpses and experiences of I AM or vivid spaciousness or some recognition of being an observer, but all these are not the I AM Realization of Thusness Stage 1, nor is Stage 1 realization merely a state of clarity. Self-Inquiry will lead to doubtless realization. I had glimpses of I AM on and off for three years before my doubtless Self-Realization in February 2010 which I wrote in my first journal entry of my free e-book. On the differences, see I AM Experience/Glimpse/Recognition vs I AM Realization (Certainty of Being) and the first point in Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives

For further progress after I AM realization, focus on Four Aspects of I AM, contemplating the two stanzas of anatta in On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection and Two Types of Nondual Contemplation

Many people I know (including Thusness himself) were/are stuck at Phase 1~3 for decades or their whole life without much progress due to lack of clear pointers and guidance, but by following Thusness's advice on the four aspects and contemplation on anatta (no-self), I was able to progress from Phase 1 realization to Phase 5 in less than a year, back in 2010.

Stage 2: The Experience of "I AM Everything"

It seemed that my experience was supported by many Advaita and Hindu teachings. But the biggest mistake I made was when I spoke to a Buddhist friend. He told me about the doctrine of no-self, about no 'I'. I rejected such doctrine outright as it was in direct contradiction with what I had experienced. I was deeply confused for some time and could not appreciate why Buddha had taught this doctrine and worse still, make it a Dharma Seal. Until one day, I experienced the fusing of everything into 'Me' but somehow there was no 'me'. It was like an "I-less I'. I somehow accepted the 'no I' idea but then I still insisted that Buddha shouldn't have put it that way...

The experience was wonderful, it was as if I was totally emancipated, a complete release without boundary. I told myself, "I am totally convinced that I am no longer confused", so I wrote a poem (something like the below),

I am the rain
I am the sky
I am the 'blueness'
The color of the sky
Nothing is more real than the I
Therefore Buddha, I am I.

There is a phrase for this experience -- Whenever and wherever there IS, the IS is Me. This phrase was like a mantra to me. I often used this to lead me back into the experience of Presence.

The rest of the journey was the unfolding and further refining of this experience of Total Presence, but somehow there was always this blockage, this 'something' preventing me from recapturing the experience. It was the inability to fully 'die' into total Presence..

Comments by Soh: The following excerpt should clarify about this phase:

"It is bringing this I AM into everything. I AM the I in you. The I in the cat, the I in the bird. I AM the first person in everyone and Everything. I. That is my second phase. That the I is ultimate and universal." - John Tan, 2013

Stage 3: Entering Into a State of Nothingness

Somehow something was blocking the natural flow of my innermost essence and preventing me from re-living the experience. Presence was still there but there was no sense of 'totality'. It was both logically and intuitively clear that 'I' was the problem. It was the 'I' that was blocking; it was the 'I' that was the limit; it was the 'I' that was the boundary but why couldn't I do away with it? At that point in time it didn't occur to me that I should look into the nature of awareness and what awareness is all about. Instead, I was too occupied with the art of entering into a state of oblivion to get rid of the 'I'... This continued for the next 13+ years (in between of course there were many other minor events and the experience of total presence did occur many times, but with gaps a few months long)...

However I came to one important understanding –
The 'I' is the root cause of all artificialities, true freedom is in spontaneity. Surrender into complete nothingness and everything is simply Self So.

Comments by Soh:

Here's something John wrote to me about Stage 3 while I was having some glimpses of Stage 1 and 2 in 2008,

"Associating 'death of I' with vivid luminosity of your experience is far too early. This will lead you into erroneous views because there is also the experience of practitioners by way of complete surrendering or elimination (dropping) like Taoist practitioners. An experience of deep bliss that is beyond that of what you experienced can occur. But the focus is not on luminosity but effortlessness, naturalness and spontaneity. In complete giving up, there is no 'I' ; it is also needless to know anything; in fact 'knowledge' is considered a stumbling block. The practitioner drops away mind, body, knowledge...everything. There is no insight, there is no luminosity there is only total allowing of whatever that happens, happen in its own accord. All senses including consciousness are shut and fully absorbed. Awareness of 'anything' is only after emerging from that state.

One is the experience of vivid luminosity while the other is a state of oblivious. It is therefore not appropriate to relate the complete dissolving of 'I' with what you experienced alone."

Also see this article for comments on Stage 3: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/03/thusnesss-comments-on-nisargadatta.html

However, it is only at John Tan/Thusness Stage 4 and 5 that one realizes that the effortless and natural way to give up self/Self is through the realization and actualization of anatta as an insight, not through entering a special or altered state of trance, samadhi, absorption or oblivion. As John wrote before,

"...it seems that lots of effort need to be put in -- which is really not the case. The entire practice turns out to an undoing process. It is a process of gradually understanding the workings of our nature that is from beginning liberated but clouded by this sense of 'self' that is always trying to preserve, protect and ever attached. The entire sense of self is a 'doing'. Whatever we do, positive or negative, is still doing. Ultimately there is not-even a letting go or let be, as there is already continuous dissolving and arising and this ever dissolving and arising turns out to be self-liberating. Without this 'self' or 'Self', there is no 'doing', there is only spontaneous arising. "

~ John (source: Non-dual and karmic patterns)

"...When one is unable to see the truth of our nature, all letting go is nothing more than another from of holding in disguise. Therefore without the 'insight', there is no releasing.... it is a gradual process of deeper seeing. when it is seen, the letting go is natural. You cannot force yourself into giving up the self... purification to me is always these insights... non-dual and emptiness nature...."

Stage 4: Presence as Mirror Bright Clarity

I got in touch with Buddhism in 1997. Not because I wanted to find out more about the experience of 'Presence' but rather the teaching of impermanence synced deeply with what I was experiencing in life. I was faced with the possibility of losing all my wealth and more by financial crisis. At that point in time I had no idea that Buddhism is so profoundly rich on the aspect of 'Presence'. The mystery of life cannot be understood, I sought for a refuge in Buddhism *(comments by Soh: he took refuge in the triple gems Buddha, Dharma and Sangha under the 41st H.H. Sakya Trizin)* to alleviate my sorrows caused by the financial crisis, but it turned out to be the missing key towards experiencing total presence.

I wasn't that resistant then to the doctrine of 'no-self' but the idea that all phenomenal existence is empty of an inherent 'self' or 'Self' did not quite get into me. Were they talking about the 'self' as a personality or 'Self' as 'Eternal Witness'? Must we do away even with the 'Witness'? Was the Witness itself another illusion?

There is thinking, no thinker
There is sound, no hearer

Suffering exists, no sufferer
Deeds there are, no doer

I was meditating on the meaning of the above stanza deeply until one day, suddenly I heard 'tongss...', it was so clear, there was nothing else, just the sound and nothing else! And 'tongs...' resounding... It was so clear, so vivid!

That experience was so familiar, so real and so clear. It was the same experience of "I AM"... it was without thought, without concepts, without intermediary, without anyone there, without any in-between... What was it? IT was Presence! But this time it was not 'I AM', it was not asking 'who am I', it was not the pure sense of "I AM", it was 'TONGSss....', the pure Sound...
Then came Taste, just the Taste and nothing else....
The heart beats...
The Scenery...

There was no gap in between, no longer a few months gap for it to arise...
There never was a stage to enter, no I to cease and never had it existed
There is no entry and exit point...
There is no Sound out there or in here...
There is no 'I' apart from the arising and ceasing...
The manifold of Presence...
Moment to moment Presence unfolds...

Comments:

This is the beginning of seeing through no-self. Insight into no-self has arisen but non-dual experience is still very much 'Brahman' rather than 'Sunyata'; in fact it is more Brahman than ever. Now "I AMness" is experienced in All.

Nevertheless it is a very important key phase where the practitioner experiences a quantum leap in perception untying the dualistic knot. This is also the key insight leading to the realization that "All is Mind", all is just this One Reality.

The tendency to extrapolate an Ultimate Reality or Universal Consciousness where we are part of this Reality remains surprisingly strong. Effectively the dualistic knot is gone but the bond of seeing things inherently isn't. 'Dualistic' and 'inherent' knots that prevent the full experiencing of our Maha, empty and non-dual nature of pristine awareness are two very different 'perceptual spells' that blind.

The subsection "On Second Stanza" of the post "On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection" further elaborates this insight.

Comments by Soh:

The beginning of non-dual realization and the gateless gate without entry and exit. One no longer seeks after a state of oblivion to get rid of self as in the case of Stage 3 but starts to realize and actualize the always-already-so of no-self and non-dual nature of Awareness. Still, Stage 4 tends to end up in the case of dissolving separateness into the pole of an ultimate pure subjectivity rather than seeing consciousness as the mere flow of phenomenality as in Stage 5, thus leaving traces of an Absolute.

John wrote in 2005:

"Without 'self' oneness is immediately attained. There is only and always this Isness. Subject has always been the Object of observation. This is true samadhi without entering trance. Completely understanding this truth. It is the true way towards liberation. Every sound, sensation, arising of consciousness is so clear, real and vivid. Every moment is samadhi. The tip of the fingers in contact with the keyboard, mysteriously created the contact consciousness, what is it? Feel the entirety of beingness and realness. There is no subject... just Isness. No thought, there really is no thought and no 'self'. Only Pure Awareness.", "How could anyone understand? The crying, the sound, the noise is buddha. It is all the experience of Thusness. To know the true meaning of this, Hold not even the slightest trace of 'I'. In the most natural state of ILessNess, All Is. Even if one said the same statement, the depth of experience differs. The is no point convincing anyone. Can anyone understand? Any form of rejection, Any sort of division Is to reject buddhahood. If there is a slightest sense of a subject, an experiencer, we miss the point. Natural Awareness is subjectless. The vividness and clarity. Feel, taste, see and hear with totality. There is always no 'I'. Thank you Buddha, You truly know. :)"

Stage 5: No Mirror Reflecting

There is no mirror reflecting
All along manifestation alone is.
The one hand claps
Everything IS!

Effectively Phase 4 is merely the experience of non-division between subject/object. The initial insight glimpsed from the anatta stanza is without self but in the later phase of my progress it appeared more like subject/object as an inseparable union, rather than absolutely no-subject. This is precisely the 2nd case of the Three levels of understanding Non-Dual. I was still awed by the pristineness and vividness of phenomena in phase 4.

Phase 5 is quite thorough in being no one and I would call this anatta in all 3 aspects -- no subject/object division, no doer-ship and absence of agent.

The trigger point here is the direct and thorough seeing that 'the mirror is nothing more than an arising thought'. With this, the solidity and all the grandeur of 'Brahman' goes down the drain. Yet it feels perfectly right and liberating without the agent and being simply as an arising thought or as a vivid moment of a bell resounding. All the vividness and presence

remains, with an additional sense of freedom. Here a mirror/reflection union is clearly understood as flawed, there is only vivid reflection. There cannot be a 'union' if there isn't a subject to begin with. It is only in subtle recalling, that is in a thought recalling a previous moment of thought, that the watcher seems to exist. From here, I moved towards the 3rd degree of non-dual.

The Stanza One complements and refines Stanza Two to make the experience of no-self thorough and effortless into just only chirping birds, drum beats, footsteps, sky, mountain, walking, chewing and tasting; no witness whatsoever hiding anywhere! 'Everything' is a process, event, manifestation and phenomenon, nothing ontological or having an essence.

This phase is a very thorough non-dual experience; there is effortlessness in the non-dual and one realizes that in seeing there is always just scenery and in hearing, always just sounds. We find true delights in naturalness and ordinariness as commonly expressed in Zen as 'chop wood, carry water; spring comes, grass grows'. With regards to ordinariness (see "On Maha in Ordinariness"), this must also be correctly understood. A recent conversation with Simpo summarizes what I am trying to convey with regards to ordinariness. Simpo (Longchen) is a very insightful and sincere practitioner, there are some very good quality articles written by him regarding non-duality in his website Dreamdatum.

Yes Simpo,

Non-dual is ordinary as there is no 'beyond' stage to arrive at. It appears to be extraordinary and grandeur only as an afterthought due to comparison.

That said, the maha experience appearing as "universe chewing" and the spontaneity of pristine happening must still remain maha, free, boundless and clear. For that is what it is and cannot be otherwise. The "extraordinariness and grandeur" that result from comparison must also be correctly discerned from the 'what is' of non-dual.

Whenever contraction steps in, it is already a manifestation of 'experiencer-experience split'. Conventionally speaking, that being the cause, that is the effect. Whatever the condition is, be it the result of unfavorable situations or subtle recalling to arrive at a certain good sensation or attempting to fix an imaginary split, we have to treat it that the 'non-dual' insight has not pervaded into our entire being like the way 'karmic tendency to divide' does. We have not fearlessly, openly and unreservedly welcomed whatever is. :-)

Just my view, a casual sharing.
Practitioners up to this level often get over excited believing that this phase is final; in fact it does appear to be a sort of pseudo finality. But this is a misunderstanding. Nothing much can be said. The practitioner will also be naturally led into spontaneous perfection without going further in emptying the aggregates. :-)

For further comments: http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/210722?page=6

Comments:

The drop is thorough, the center is gone. The center is nothing more than a subtle karmic tendency to divide. A more poetic expression would be "sound hears, scenery sees, the dust is the mirror." Transient phenomena themselves have always been the mirror; only a strong dualistic view prevents the seeing.

Very often cycles after cycles of refining our insights are needed to make the non-dual less 'concentrative' and more 'effortless'. This relates to experiencing the non-solidity and spontaneity of experience. The subsection "On First Stanza" of the post "On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection" further elaborates this phase of insight.

At this phase, we must be clear that emptying the subject will only result in non-duality and there is a need to further empty the aggregates, 18 dhatus. This means one must further penetrate the emptiness nature of the 5 aggregates, 18 dhatus with dependent origination and emptiness. The need to reify a Universal Brahman is understood as the karmic tendency to 'solidify' experiences. This leads to the understanding of the empty nature of non-dual presence.

Stage 6: The Nature of Presence is Empty

Phase 4 and 5 are the grayscale of seeing through the subject that it does not exist in actuality (anatta), there are only the aggregates. However even the aggregates are empty (Heart Sutra). It may sound obvious but more often than not, even a practitioner who has matured the anatta experience (as in phase 5) will miss the essence of it.

As I have said earlier, phase 5 does appear to be final and it is pointless to emphasize anything. Whether one proceeds further to explore this empty nature of Presence and move into the Maha world of suchness will depend on our conditions.

At this juncture, it is necessary to have clarity on what Emptiness is not to prevent misunderstandings:

- Emptiness is not a substance
- Emptiness is not a substratum or background
- Emptiness is not light
- Emptiness is not consciousness or awareness
- Emptiness is not the Absolute
- Emptiness does not exist on its own
- Objects do not consist of emptiness
- Objects do not arise from emptiness
- Emptiness of the "I" does not negate the "I"
- Emptiness is not the feeling that results when no objects are appearing to the mind
- Meditating on emptiness does not consist of quieting the mind

Source: Non-Dual Emptiness Teaching
And I would like to add,

Emptiness is not a path of practice
Emptiness is not a form of fruition

1Emptiness is the 'nature' of all experiences. There is nothing to attain or practice. What we have to realize is this empty nature, this 'ungraspability', 'unlocatability ' and 'interconnectedness' nature of all vivid arising. Emptiness will reveal that not only is there no 'who' in pristine awareness, there is no 'where' and 'when'. Be it 'I', 'Here' or 'Now', all are simply impressions that dependently originate in accordance with the principle of conditionality.

When there is this, that is.
With the arising of this, that arises.
When this is not, neither is that.
With the cessation of this, that ceases.

The profundity of this four-liner principle of conditionality is not in words. For a more theoretical exposition, see Non-Dual Emptiness Teachings by Dr. Greg Goode; for a more experiential narration, see the subsection "On Emptiness" and "On Maha" of the post "On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection".

Comments:

Here practice is clearly understood as neither going after the mirror nor escaping from the maya reflection; it is to thoroughly 'see' the 'nature' of reflection. To see that there is really no mirror other than the on-going reflection due to our emptiness nature. Neither is there a mirror to cling to as the background reality nor a maya to escape from. Beyond these two extreme lies the middle path -- the prajna wisdom of seeing that the maya is our Buddha nature.

Recently An Eternal Now has updated some very high quality articles that better described the maha experience of suchness. Do read the following articles:

- Emancipation of Suchness
- Buddha-Dharma: A Dream in a Dream

The last 3 subsections ("On Emptiness", "On Maha in Ordinariness", "Spontaneous Perfection") of the post "On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection" elaborates this phase of emptiness insight and the gradual progress of maturing the experience into the effortless mode of practice. It is important to know that in addition to the experience of the unfindability and ungraspability of emptiness, the interconnectedness of everything creating the Maha experience is equally precious.

Stage 7: Presence is Spontaneously Perfected

After cycles and cycles of refining our practice and insights, we will come to this realization:

Anatta is a seal, not a stage.
Awareness has always been non-dual.
Appearances have always been Non-arising.
All phenomena are 'interconnected' and by nature Maha.
All are always and already so. Only dualistic and inherent views are obscuring these experiential facts and therefore what is really needed is simply to experience whatever arises openly and unreservedly (See section "On Spontaneous Perfection"). However this does not denote the end of practice; practice simply moves to become dynamic and conditions-manifestation based. The ground and the path of practice become indistinguishable.

Comments:

The entire article of On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection can be seen as the different approaches toward the eventual realization of this already perfect and uncontrived nature of awareness.

On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

Also see:

+A and -A Emptiness

(Last Updated: 14th March 2009)

Article written by: John Tan

Wonder why but of late, the topic on anatta kept surfacing in forums. Perhaps 'yuan' (condition) has arisen. -:) I will just jot down some thoughts on my experiences of 'no-self'. A casual sharing, nothing authoritative.

The 2 stanzas below are pivotal in leading me to the direct experience of no-self. Although they appear to convey the same stuff about anatta, meditating on these 2 stanzas can yield 2 very different experiential insights -- one on the

emptiness aspect and the other, the non-dual luminosity aspect. The insights that arise from these experiences are very illuminating as they contradict so much our ordinary understanding of what awareness is.

There is thinking, no thinker
There is hearing, no hearer
There is seeing, no seer

In thinking, just thoughts
In hearing, just sounds
In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.

Before proceeding any further, it is of absolute importance to know that there is no way the stanzas can be correctly understood by way of inference, logical deduction or induction. Not that there is something mystical or transcendental about the stanzas but simply the way of mental chattering is a 'wrong approach'. The right technique is through 'vipassana' or any more direct and attentive bare mode of observation that allows the seeing of things as they are. Just a casual note, such mode of knowing turns natural when non-dual insight matures, before that it can be quite 'efforting'.

On the first stanza

The two most obvious experiences from this initial glimpse of the first stanza is the lack of doer-ship and the direct insight of the absence of an agent. These 2 experiences are key for my phase 5 of the 7 phases of insights.

1. The lack of doer-ship that links and co-ordinates experiences.
Without the 'I' that links, phenomena (thoughts, sound, feelings and so on and so forth) appear bubble-like, floating and manifesting freely, spontaneously and boundlessly. With the absence of the doer-ship also comes a deep sense of freedom and transparency. Ironical as it may sound but it's true experientially. We will not have the right understanding when we hold too tightly 'inherent' view. It is amazing how 'inherent' view prevents us from seeing freedom as no-doership, interdependence and interconnectedness, luminosity and non-dual presence.

2. The direct insight of the absence of an agent.
In this case, there is a direct recognition that there is "no agent". Just one thought then another thought. So it is always thought watching thought rather than a watcher watching thought. However the gist of this realization is skewed towards a spontaneous liberating experience and a vague glimpse of the empty nature of phenomena -- that is, the transient phenomena being bubble-like and ephemeral, nothing substantial or solid. At this phase we should not misunderstand that we have experienced thoroughly the 'empty' nature of phenomena and awareness, although there is this temptation to think we have. -:)

Depending on the conditions of an individual, it may not be obvious that it is "always thought watching thought rather than a watcher watching thought." or "the watcher is that thought." Because this is the key insight and a step that cannot afford to be wrong along the path of liberation, I cannot help but with some disrespectful tone say,

For those masters that taught,
"Let thoughts arise and subside,
See the background mirror as perfect and be unaffected."
With all due respect, they have just "blah" something nice but deluded.

Rather,

See that there is no one behind thoughts.
First, one thought then another thought.
With deepening insight it will later be revealed,
Always just this, One Thought!
Non-arising, luminous yet empty!

And this is the whole purpose of anatta. To thoroughly see through that this background does not exist in actuality. What exists is a stream, action or karma. There is no doer or anything being done, there is only doing; No meditator nor meditation, only meditating. From a letting go perspective, "a watcher watching thought" will create the impression that a watcher is allowing thoughts to arise and subside while itself being unaffected. This is an illusion; it is 'holding' in disguise as 'letting go'. When we realized that there is no background from start, reality will present itself as one whole letting go. With practice, 'intention' dwindles with the maturing of insight and 'doing' will be gradually experienced as mere spontaneous happening as if universe is doing the work. With the some pointers from 'dependent origination', we can then penetrate further to see this happening as a sheer expression of everything interacting with everything coming into being. In fact, if we do not reify 'universe', it is just that -- an expression of interdependent arising that is just right wherever and whenever is.

Understanding this, practice is simply opening to whatever is.
For this mere happening is just right wherever and whenever is.
Though no place can be called home it is everywhere home.

When experience matures in the practice of great ease,
The experience is Maha! Great, miraculous and bliss.
In mundane activities of seeing, eating and tasting,
When expressed poetically is as if the entire universe meditating.

Whatever said and expressed are really all different flavors,
Of this everything of everything dependently originating,

As this moment of vivid shimmering.

By then it is clear that the transient phenomena is already happening in the perfect way; unwinding what must be unwinded, manifesting what must be manifested and subsides when it is time to go. There is no problem with this transient happening, the only problem is having an 'extra mirror', a reification due to the power of the mind to abstract. The mirror is not perfect; it is the happening that is perfect. The mirror appears to be perfect only to a dualistic and inherent view.

Our deeply held inherent and dualistic view has very subtly and unknowingly personified the "luminous aspect" into the watcher and discarded the "emptiness aspect" as the transient phenomena. The key challenge of practice is then to clearly see that luminosity and emptiness are one and inseparable, they have never and can never be separated.

On the second stanza

For the second stanza, the focus is on the vivid, pristine-ness of transience phenomena. Thoughts, sounds and all transient are indistinguishable from Awareness. There is no-experiencer-experience split, only one seamless spontaneous experience arising as thinker/thoughts, hearer/sounds, feeler/feelings and so on. In hearing, hearer and sound are indistinguishably one. For anyone that is familiar with the "I AM" experience, that pure sense of existence, that powerful experience of presence that makes one feel so real, is unforgettable. When the background is gone, all foreground phenomena reveal themselves as Presence. It is like naturally 'vipassanic' throughout or simply put, naked in awareness. From the hissing sound of PC, to the vibration of the moving MRT train, to the sensation when the feet touches the ground, all these experiences are crystal clear, no less "I AM" than "I AM". The Presence is still fully present, nothing is denied. -:)

Division of subject and object is merely an assumption.
Thus someone giving up and something to be given up is an illusion.
When self becomes more and more transparent,
Likewise phenomena become more and more luminous.
In thorough transparency all happening are pristinely and vividly clear.
Obviousness throughout, aliveness everywhere!

It will be obvious by then that only the deeply held dualistic view is obscuring our insight into this experiential fact. In actual experience, there is just the crystal clarity of phenomena manifesting. Maturing this experience, the mind-body dissolves into mere non-dual luminosity and all phenomena are experientially understood as the manifestation of this non-dual luminous presence -- the key insight leading to the realization that "All is Mind".

After this, not to be too overwhelmed or over-claimed what is more than necessary; rather investigate further. Does this non-dual luminosity exhibits any characteristic of self-nature that is independent, unchanging and permanent? A practitioner can still get stuck for quite sometimes solidifying non-dual presence unknowingly. This is leaving marks of

the 'One mirror' as described in the stage 4 of the 7 phases of my insights. Although experience is non-dual, the insight of emptiness is still not there. Though the dualistic bond has loosened sufficiently, the 'inherent' view remains strong.

When the 'subject' is gone, experience becomes non-dual but we forgotten about the 'object'. When object is further emptied, we see Dharmakaya. Do See clearly that for the case of a 'subject' that is first penetrated, it is a mere label collating the 5 aggregates but for the next level that is to be negated, it is the Presence that we are emptying -- not a label but the very presence itself that is non-dual in nature.

For sincere Buddhist practitioners that have matured non-dual insight, they may prompt themselves why is there a need for Buddha to put so much emphasis on dependent origination if non-dual presence is final? The experience is still as Vedantic, more 'Brahman' than 'Sunyata'. This 'solidity of non-dual presence' must be broken with the help of dependent origination and emptiness. Knowing this a practitioner can then progress to understand the empty (dependently originated) nature of non-dual presence. It is a further refining of anatta experience according to the first stanza.

As for those "I AMness" practitioners, it is very common for them after non-dual insight to stay in non-dual presence. They find delight in 'chop wood, carry water' and 'spring comes, grass grows by its own'. Nothing much can be stressed; the experience do appear to be final. Hopefully 'yuan' (condition) can arise for these practitioners to see this subtle mark that prevent the seeing.

On Emptiness

If we observe thought and ask where does thought arise, how does it arise, what is 'thought' like. 'Thought' will reveal its nature is empty -- vividly present yet completely un-locatable. It is very important not to infer, think or conceptualise but feel with our entire being this 'ungraspability' and 'unlocatability'. It seems to reside 'somewhere' but there is no way to locate it. It is just an impression of somewhere "there" but never "there". Similarly "here-ness" and "now-ness" are merely impressions formed by sensations, aggregates of causes and conditions, nothing inherently 'there'; equally empty like 'selfness'.

This ungraspable and unlocatable empty nature is not only peculiar to 'thought'. All experiences or sensations are like that -- vividly present yet insubstantial, un-graspable, spontaneous, un-locatable.

If we were to observe a red flower that is so vivid, clear and right in front of us, the "redness" only appears to "belong" to the flower, it is in actuality not so. Vision of red does not arise in all animal species (dogs cannot perceive colours) nor is the "redness" an inherent attribute of the mind. If given a "quantum eyesight" to look into the atomic structure, there is similarly no attribute "redness" anywhere found, only almost complete space/void with no perceivable shapes and forms. Whatever appearances are dependently arisen, and hence is empty of any inherent existence or fixed attributes, shapes, form, or "redness" -- merely luminous yet empty, mere appearances without inherent/objective existence.

Likewise when standing in front of a burning fire pit, the entire phenomena of 'fire', the burning heat, the whole sensation of 'hotness' that are so vividly present and seem so real but when examined they are also not inherently "there" -- merely dependently manifest whenever conditions are there. It is amazing how dualistic and inherent views have caged seamless experience in a who-where-when construct.

All experiences are empty. They are like sky flowers, like painting on the surface of a pond. There is no way to point to a moment of experience and say this is 'in' and that is 'out'. All 'in' are as 'out'; to awareness seamless experience is all there is. It is not the mirror or pond that is important but that process of illusion-like phenomenon of the paint shimmering on the surface of the pond; like an illusion but not an illusion, like a dream but not a dream. This is the ground of all experiences.

Yet this 'ungraspability and unlocatabilty' nature is not all there is; there is also this Maha, this great without boundaries feeling of 'interconnectedness'. When someone hits a bell, the person, the stick, the bell, the vibration of the air, the ears and then the magically appearance of sound -- 'Tongsss...re-sounding...' is all a seamless one happening, one experience. When breathing, it is just this one whole entire breath; it is all causes and conditions coming together to give rise to this entire sensation of breath as if the whole of universe is doing this breathing. The significance of this Maha experience is not in words; in my opinion, without this experience, there is no true experience of 'interconnectedness' and non-dual presence is incomplete.

The experience of our empty nature is a very different from that of non-dual oneness. 'Distance' for example is overcome in non-dual oneness by seeing through the illusory aspect of subject/object division and resulted in a one non-dual presence. It is seeing all as just 'This' but experiencing Emptiness breaks the boundary through its empty ungraspable and unlocatable nature.

There is no need for a 'where-place' or a 'when-time' or a 'who-I' when we penetrate deeply into this nature. When hearing sound, sound is neither 'in here' nor 'out there', it is where it is and gone! All centers and reference points dissolve with the wisdom that manifestation dependently originates and hence empty. The experience creates an "always right wherever and whenever is" sensation. A sensation of home everywhere though nowhere can be called home. Experiencing the emptiness nature of presence, a sincere practitioner becomes clear that indeed the non-dual presence is leaving a subtle mark; seeing its nature as empty, the last mark that solidifies experiences dissolves. It feels cool because presence is made more present and effortless. We then move from "vivid non-dual presence" into "though vividly and non-dually present, it is nothing real, empty!".

On Maha and Ordinariness

The experience of Maha may sound as if one is going after certain sort of experience and appears to be in contradiction with the 'ordinariness of enlightenment' promoted in Zen Buddhism. This is not true and in fact, without this experience, non-dual is incomplete. This section is not about Maha as a stage to achieve but to see that Sunyata is Maha

in nature. In Maha, one does not feel self, one 'feels' universe; one does not feel 'Brahman' but feels 'interconnectedness'; one does not feel 'helplessness' due to 'dependence and interconnection' but feels great without boundary, spontaneous and marvelous. Now lets get back to 'ordinariness'.

Ordinariness has always been Taoism's forte. In Zen we also see the importance of this being depicted in those enlightenment models like Tozan's 5 ranks and the The Ten Oxherding Pictures. But ordinariness must only be understood that non-dual and the Maha world of suchness is nothing beyond. There is no beyond realm to arrive at and never a separated state from our ordinary daily world; rather it is to bring this primordial, original and untainted experience of non-dual and Maha experience into the most mundane activities. If this experience is not found in most mundane and ordinary activities then practitioners have not matured their understandings and practices.

Before Maha experience has always been rare occurrence in the natural state and was treated as a passing trend that comes and goes. Inducing the experience often involves concentration on repeatedly doing some task for a short period of time for example,

If we were to breathe in and out, in and out...till there is simply this entire sensation of breath, just breath as all causes and conditions coming into this moment of manifestation.

If we were to focus on the sensation of stepping, the sensation of hardness, just the sensation of the hardness, till there is simply this entire sensation 'hardness' when the feet touches the ground, just this 'hardness' as all causes and conditions coming into this moment of manifestation.

If we were to focus on hearing someone hitting a bell, the stick, the bell, the vibration of the air, the ears all coming together for this sensation of sound to arise, we will have Maha experience.
...

However ever since incorporating the teaching of dependent origination into non-dual presence, over the years it has become more 'accessible' but never has this been understood as a ground state. There seems to be a predictable relationship of seeing interdependent arising and emptiness on the experience of non-dual presence.

A week ago, the clear experience of Maha dawned and became quite effortless and at the same time there is a direct realization that it is also a natural state. In Sunyata, Maha is natural and must be fully factored into the path of experiencing whatever arises. Nevertheless Maha as a ground state requires the maturing of non-dual experience; we cannot feel entirely as the interconnectedness of everything coming spontaneously into being as this moment of vivid manifestation with a divided mind.

> The universe is this arising thought.
> The universe is this arising sound.
> Just this magnificent arising!

Is Tao.
Homage to all arising.

On Spontaneous Perfection

Lastly, when these 2 experiences inter-permeate, what is really needed is simply to experience whatever arises openly and unreservedly. It may sound simple but do not underestimate this simple path; even aeon lives of practices cannot touch the depth of its profundity.

In fact all the subsections -- "On Stanza One", "On Stanza Two", "On Emptiness", there is already certain emphasis of the natural way. With regards to the natural way, I must say that spontaneous presence and experiencing whatever arises openly, unreservedly and fearlessly is not the 'path' of any tradition or religion -- Be it Zen, Mahamudra, Dzogchen, Advaita, Taoism or Buddhism. In fact the natural way is the 'path' of Tao but Taoism cannot claim monopoly over the 'path' simply because it has a longer history. My experience is that any sincere practitioner after maturing non-dual experiences will eventually come to this automatically and naturally. It is like in the blood, there is no other way than the natural way.

That said, the natural and spontaneous way is often misrepresented. It should not be taken to mean that there is no need to do anything or practice is unnecessary. Rather it is the deepest insight of a practitioner that after cycles and cycles of refining his insights on the aspect of anatta, emptiness and dependent origination, he suddenly realized that anatta is a seal and non-dual luminosity and emptiness have always been 'the ground' of all experiences. Practice then shift from 'concentrative' to 'effortless' mode and for this it requires the complete pervading of non-dual and emptiness insights into our entire being like how "dualistic and inherent views" has invaded consciousness.

In any case, care must be taken not to make our empty and luminous nature into a metaphysical essence. I will end with a comment I wrote in another blog Luminous Emptiness as it summarizes pretty well what I have written.

The degree of "un-contrivance",
Is the degree of how unreserved and fearless we open to whatever is.
For whatever arises is mind, always seen, heard, tasted and experienced.
What that is not seen, not heard and not experienced,
Is our conceptual idea of what mind is.

Whenever we objectify the "brilliance, the pristine-ness" into an entity that is formless,
It becomes an object of grasp that prevents the seeing of the "forms",
the texture and the fabric of awareness.
The tendency to objectify is subtle,
we let go of 'selfness' yet unknowingly grasped 'nowness' and 'hereness'.
Whatever arises merely dependently originates, needless of who, where and when.

All experiences are equal, luminous yet empty of self-nature.
Though empty it has not in anyway denied its vivid luminosity.

Liberation is experiencing mind as it is.
Self-Liberation is the thorough insight that this liberation is always and already is;
Spontaneously present, naturally perfected!

PS:
We should not treat the insight of emptiness as 'higher' than that of non-dual luminosity. It is just different insights dawning due to differing conditions. To some practitioners, the insight of our empty nature comes before non-dual luminosity.

For a more detailed conceptual understanding of Emptiness, do read the article "Non-Dual Emptiness" by Dr. Greg Goode.

Different Degress of No-Self: Non-Doership, Non-dual, Anatta, Total Exertion and Dealing with Pitfalls

Different Degrees of No-Self: Non-Doership, Non-dual, Anatta, Total Exertion and Dealing with Pitfalls

Available Translations of Different Degrees of No-Self

- 简体中文版 (Simplified Chinese)
- 繁體中文版 (Traditional Chinese)
- (Korean) 무아의 다양한 정도
- (Japanese) 無我の様々な程度
- (German) Nicht-Handelns, Nicht-Dual, Anatta
- (Brazilian PT) Diferentes Graus de Não-Eu
- (European PT) Diferentes Graus do Não-Eu
- (French) Différents degrés de Non-Self
- (Spanish) Diferentes Grados de No-Self: No-Accionismo, No-Dualidad, Anatta, Exertión Total y Cómo Enfrentar las Trampas
- (Tamil) சுயமற்றதன்மையின் வேறுபட்ட நிலைகள்
- (Hindi) नो-सेल्फ के विभिन्न स्तर

Also see

- Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment
- Dark Night of the Soul, Depersonalization, Dissociation, and Derealization

Someone wrote:
Anatta
Question

Hi friends.

I have a question.

First, I have to quickly give some back ground.

Several years ago, I had a profound experience. It was as if a veil was removed and I suddenly saw that I didn't exist. There were no Self or free will inside that could control this organism that is the body. I spent years observing myself and others from this perspective. It was the first thing I thought of when I woke up in the morning and the last thing I thought of before falling to sleep, until I was empty.

Nobody around me saw the same thing or got mad if I talked about it. I started studying science to find support or evidence against my thoughts. It only confirmed that the world is fatalistic and way to complex to understand in each moment. This took me even further.

So, now my life has stopped and there is noone inside to care. Only some faint and weak emotional and mental reactions to whatever stimuli is put in front of my senses. No hopes, ambitions or goals. I don't pay my bills or take care of myself. I mean, why should "I"?

Eventualy, 3-4 years ago, I came over some "spiritual" litterature that mentioned the buddhist doctrine of anatta and samsaric consciousness.

What would a buddhist recommend to do in this situation? I mean, I will either end up dead or in prison soon if nothing happens. I'm okay with that. I don't look forward to physical pain, though.
Is there something worth doing? Is this the end of the "path"? To realise that I don't exist?
...

You are right. It has been very imbalanced and unhealthy, and thus it became exhausting and eventually a problem. But it has also been profound and beautiful experiences, despite the fear, doubt and lack of understanding for what happened. I am at a point where I need some guidence and practices on how to do this properly and the right way, or at least a better and healthier way. So, I think I am open to corrections and guidence. Thank you again.
——
Me/Soh replied:

Hi,

u/krodha (Kyle Dixon) directed me to this post... I think I will share my 2 cents.

There are different degrees of self/Self. I can elaborate a lot of them -- you can find these elaborations on my blog and (free) guide - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/06/the-awakening-to-reality-practice-guide.html

But in this post I will just summarise them.

There are three main degrees or aspects of self/Self and no-self/Self experience, although each of them has different degrees of refinement in terms of insight + experience:

1. no-self as 'non-doership'. You no longer feel like a doer or controller, all thoughts and actions are just happening spontaneously on its own accord. You see that even your thoughts and emotions are not from a doer, you can't even know what your next moment of thought is, it just happens. When you are thirsty, the hand just grabs the drink on its own accord and the body just gulps down the drink.

A more refined level of non-doership is what I call 'impersonality'. Impersonality is not just an experience of non-doership. It is the dissolving of the construct of 'personal self' that led to a purging of ego effect to a state of clean, pure, not-mine sort of "perception shift", accompanied with a sense that everything and everyone is being expressions of the same aliveness/intelligence/consciousness. This can then be easily extrapolated into a sense of a 'universal source' (but this is merely an extrapolation and at a later phase is deconstructed) and one will also experience 'being lived' by this greater Life and Intelligence.

Impersonality will help dissolve the sense of self but it has the danger of making one attached to a metaphysical essence or to personify, reify and extrapolate a universal consciousness. Deeper insights into anatta and emptiness will dissolve this tendency to reify and extrapolate.

Also, I should also mention that there is another insight or realization -- and this is not the same as non-doership but rather the realization of one's luminous essence as Pure Presence and Clarity. Someone who has experienced non-doership does not necessarily realize that one's very Beingness, Presence-Awareness, that I AMness -- that remains even without engaging in concepts/thinking. It is when at a moment where all engagement in thoughts subside, in that gap, there is this sudden realization of doubtless Existence itself, that even without a thought, just I/Existence/Consciousness. And you realize that is the Luminous core of Existence itself. It is consciousness, pure beingness and bliss. This realization is often reified into the Atman but I consider this realization precious and important and a progression from mere non-doership, but on later realizations below will get refined, especially with realization of anatta. Realization of anatta in point 3) sees the nature of this Presence-Awareness, not by denying it but properly comprehending it - its non-inherent, empty and non-dual nature of that Presence-Awareness (also its nondual aspect does not imply realizing its empty nature, but I will not elaborate too much yet). But basically if you have this realization, you will not end up sounding so nihilistic because you have discovered a very positive luminous core of Existence. Also, after this realization, you feel like an infinite Ground of Being underlying all your thoughts and in fact the entire world. When you jog across the streets, no longer do you see yourself as a person relating to objects out there, rather, all objects and trees and people and scenery actually emerge and subside and 'pass through' from within that Ground of Being, much like the projections of a movie merely 'pass through' the screen. You no longer feel like someone that pass by things, rather your body and mind, the scenery and objects are merely 'projected from' and 'pass by' within unmoved Beingness.

About this realization, John Tan also wrote before,

“

"Hi Mr. H,

In addition to what you wrote, I hope to convey another dimension of Presence to you. That is Encountering Presence in its first impression, unadulterated and full blown in stillness.

So after reading it, just feel it with your entire body-mind and forgot about it. Don't let it corrupt your mind. 😝

Presence, Awareness, Beingness, Isness are all synonyms. There can be all sorts of definitions but all these are not the path to it. The path to it must be non-conceptual and direct. This is the only way.

When contemplating the koan "before birth who am I", the thinking mind attempts to seek into it's memory bank for similar experiences to get an answer. This is how the thinking mind works - compare, categorize and measure in order to understand.

However, when we encounter such a koan, the mind reaches its limit when it tries to penetrate its own depth with no answer. There will come a time when the mind exhausts itself and come to a complete standstill and from that stillness comes an earthshaking BAM!

I. Just I.

Before birth this I, a thousand years ago this I, a thousand later this I. I AM I.

It is without any arbitrary thoughts, any comparisons. It fully authenticates it's own clarity, it's own existence, ITSELF in clean, pure, direct non-conceptuality. No why, no because.

Just ITSELF in stillness nothing else.

Intuit the vipassana and the samantha. Intuit the total exertion and realization. The essence of message must be raw and uncontaminated by words.

Hope that helps!" - John Tan, 2019"

However someone who realize non-doership may not yet realize that Presence-Awareness, so doing self-enquiry (asking Who/What am I?) can help one going into that direction. The I AM realization is also important, and can serve as an important base for further insights, as explained in Anatta and Pure Presence. To realize I AM, the most direct method is Self-Inquiry, asking yourself 'Before birth, Who am I?' or just 'Who am I?' See: What is your very Mind right now?, and the self-inquiry chapter in The Awakening to Reality Practice Guide and AtR Guide - abridged version.

It is actually very important to have the direct realization of one's radiance, one's pristine consciousness or pure Presence. Without which, one's experience of no-self will be skewed to non-doership and one will not experience pellucid non-dual luminosity. That is not considered genuine realization of anatman in AtR. For more reading on this topic, you can read Pellucid No-Self, Non-Doership, Nice Advice and Expression of Anatta from Yin Ling and Albert Hong + What is Experiential Insight?, Anatta and Pure Presence, Actual Freedom and the Immediate Radiance in the Transience, The Transient Universe has a Heart

2) no-self in terms of the penetrating and dissolving of the subject/object or perceiver/perceived dichotomy. This relates to the sense of being an internal subjective perceiver perceiving the world of objects in the senses. In other words, normal people feel deeply that they are relating to the world from behind their own eyes, as someone perceiving an 'outside world' of trees and people and objects and so on and the shapes and colors and characteristics of those trees/tables/objects are just inherent attributes of observer-independent objects 'out there', and they are merely observing them from a vantagepoint 'within' their body as an internal perceiver -- subject, and object. Perceiver and perceived. And this is so not only in relation to sights but even sounds and other sensory perceptions, for normal people hear sound as if the sound is somewhere 'out there' while they are located and hearing the sounds from somewhere 'in here', that is to say, inside their own body (exactly where that is, is uncertain, and upon examination some people may say it is the head, some people point to their heart, basically normal people don't examine things clearly and just take their sense of self and duality for granted). But this sense of self and sense of duality is a very real experience for most people, that they have unquestioningly taken it for granted as their reality.

It should be understood and noted that someone who has experienced the non-doership or even impersonality aspect of no-self in 1), may not experience non-duality in 2). In other words, one can still experience everything happening on its own accord, but still feel like a dissociated observer detached from things happening on their own. In a sense, it's almost like everything the body and mind is doing seems like another person, like you are playing a third person shooter game where you are sort of watching the whole character from a distance behind, except in a dissociated state you aren't even 'controlling' the character people refer to as 'you' -- rather, you are merely observing this person or body-mind called 'you' acting and thinking and behaving in its own way and you are just this aloof and detached observer of this character or body-mind doing its own thing. Some people have experienced this sort of dissociation coupled with a sense of non-doership.

Now, this means that the sense of doership dissolving does not mean that the subject and object dichotomy is dissolved. Therefore we can call that sense of subject-object duality, or the gap between perceiver and perceived, as a distinct layer of 'self' that can be penetrated in deeper insight.
Now, the dissolution of subject-object/perceiver-perceived dichotomy can happen as an experience, which is transient, short-lived peak experiences, or it can happen as a realization which leads to stabilization of non-dual experience.

As an experience, it is quite commonly experienced and described by people, often spontaneously when they just enjoy music, watch a sunset, enjoy a beautiful scenery and so on, where they suddenly become so engaged and engrossed in their sensory experience that they have totally forgotten their 'self' -- and in the act of forgetting the self they enter into what seems like a different state of consciousness, a very vivid and intensified one where they are no longer 'seeing' the sunset from a distance, they are the very sunset itself -- they may describe it as 'I have merged with the sun!' 'I have become the trees!' There is suddenly no longer this sense that 'I' am someone 'in here' separate from the 'sun over there', there is just brilliant and very alive bright orange light displaying itself to itself at no distance at all, a very vivid, brilliant and alive display of colors as clear vivid consciousness.

In describing such a peak experience, Michael Jackson wrote,

"Consciousness expresses itself through creation. This world we live in is the dance of the creator. Dancers come and go in the twinkling of an eye but the dance lives on. On many an occasion when I am dancing, I have felt touched by something sacred. In those moments, I felt my spirit soar and become one with everything that exists.

I become the stars and the moon. I become the lover and the beloved. I become the victor and the vanquished. I become the master and the slave. I become the singer and the song. I become the knower and the known. I keep on dancing then it is the eternal dance or creation. The creator and creation merge into one wholeness of joy. I keep on dancing...and dancing...and dancing. Until there is only...the dance."

However, what is described here is still merely an experience. An experience of non-duality, but not the realisation. Such experiences come and go. Some people engage in dangerous sports to enter the zone and glimpse the bliss of non-duality, some people do it through dance, some people through certain drugs, some people do it through meditation.

But all these experiences come and go, until a paradigm shift takes place in consciousness where one suddenly realizes that the truth about reality or consciousness is that there never was a subject and object division, that consciousness was in truth never from the beginning ever divided into a perceiver and perceived, consciousness and its display, that they were never separate to begin with. After insights into non-duality, the tendency will no longer be to dissociate from experience but to fully open to experience in an undivided and gapless way -- experiencing everything without distance as vivid consciousness.

Such a realization can however be divided into two types:

a) substantialist/essentialist non-duality
b) non-substantialist/non-essentialist non-duality

The latter, I call the realization of anatta, proper.

But lets talk about a) substantialist/essentialist non-duality in summary:

Such a person may have realized that their consciousness was never divided from manifestations, that all manifestations are none other than consciousness itself. However the karmic (deep conditioning) tendency to conceive of consciousness as an inherently existing, unchanging source and substratum of phenomena, remains — except consciousness is now seen to be undivided from its manifestation, so one subsumes everything to be modulations of Pure Consciousness. One sees that all phenomena are merely Consciousness displaying itself in various forms. Yet one does not equate the forms with consciousness -- the forms are like passing light shows displayed on an unchanging screen/mirror, while the projections and reflections pass through inseparably from the base of the mirror without subject/object division, the underlying basis of consciousness remains unchanged. Hinduism can get as far to this point.

3) No-Self in terms of what I call realization of Anatta

But then there is b), where one realizes that not only is it the case that all forms are merely modulations of consciousness, in actual fact 'Awareness' or 'Consciousness' is truly and only Everything -- in other words, there is no 'Awareness' or 'Consciousness' besides the very luminous manifestation of the aggregates, whatever is seen, heard, sensed, touched, cognized, smelled...
Anatta is not merely a freeing of personality sort of experience; rather, there is an insight into the complete lack of a self/agent, a doer, a thinker, a watcher, etc, cannot be found apart from the moment to moment flow of manifestation.

Non-duality is thoroughly seen to be always already so: here is effortlessness in the non-dual and one realizes that in seeing there is always just scenery (no seer or even seeing besides the colors) and in hearing, always just sounds (never a hearer or even a hearing besides the sounds). A very important point here is that Anatta/No-Self is a Dharma Seal, it is the nature of Reality all the time -- and not merely as a state free from personality, ego or the 'small self' or a stage to attain. This means that it does not depend on the level of achievement of a practitioner to experience anatta but Reality has always been Anatta and what is important here is the intuitive insight into it as the nature, characteristic, of phenomenon (dharma seal).

To illustrate further due to the importance of this seal, I would like to borrow a quote from the Bahiya Sutta (http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../ajahn-amaro-on-non...)

'in the seeing, there is just the seen, no seer', 'in the hearing, there is just the heard, no hearer'...
If a practitioner were to feel that he has gone beyond the experiences from 'I hear sound' to a stage of 'becoming sound' or takes that 'there is just mere sound', then this experience is again distorted. For in actual case, there is and always is only sound when hearing; never was there a hearer to begin with. Nothing attained for it is always so. This is the main difference between a momentary peak experience (lasting minutes or at most an hour) of non-duality, and a permanent quantum shift of perception that makes that peak experience become a permanent mode of perception. This is the seal of no-self and can be realized and experienced in all moments; not just a mere concept.

In summary, after the realization of anatta of b), and even the substantiated nondualism of a) to some degree, non-dual no longer becomes a passing peak experience that comes and goes, as the entire paradigm of consciousness, knot of perception, mental proliferation -- the continuous activity of projecting a 'self' or 'subject/object dichotomy' is severed at a more fundamental level as the delusional framework through which one perceives the world is undermined. What I can say is that for me personally, for the past 9+ years after realizing anatta, I have not experienced the slightest sense of subject/object duality or agency at all, not even the slightest trace. That is gone for good and is not merely a peak experience here.

What you described in your post is what I called 'non-doership'. And yes, that's a wonderful insight but there are still more wonderful insights down the road that is truly life changing in a very positive way, that I cannot highly recommend enough.

The world experienced after realization and maturation of anatta, after all sense of self/Self in all its facets are totally dissolved, is truly wonderful. Here is how I described it in my (free) guide:

"This is a world where nothing can ever sully and touch that purity and perfection, where the whole of universe/whole of mind is always experienced vividly as that very purity and perfection devoid of any kind of sense of self or perceiver whatsoever that is experiencing the world at a distance from a vantagepoint -- life without 'self' is a living paradise free of afflictive/painful emotions, where every color, sound, smell, taste, touch and detail of the world stands out as the very boundless field of pristine awareness, sparkling brilliance/radiance, colorful, high-saturation, HD, luminous, heightened intensity and shining wonderment and magicality, where the surrounding sights, sounds, scents, sensations, smells, thoughts are seen and experienced so clearly down to the tiniest details, vividly and naturally, not just in one sense door but all six, where the world is a fairy-tale like wonderland, revealed anew every moment in its fullest depths as if you are a new-born baby experiencing life for the first time, afresh and never seen before, where life is abundant with peace, joy and fearlessness even amidst the apparent chaos and troubles of life, and everything

experienced through all the senses far surpasses any beauty previously experienced, as if the universe is like heaven made of glittering gold and jewels, experienced in complete gapless directness without separation, where life and the universe is experienced in its intense lucidity, clarity, aliveness and vivifying presence not only without intermediary and separation but without center and boundaries - infinitude as vast as an endless night sky is actualized every moment, an infinitude that is simply the vast universe appearing as an empty, distanceless, dimensionless and powerful presencing, where the mountains and stars on the horizon stands out no more distant than one's breath, and shines forth as intimately as one's heartbeat, where the cosmic scale of infinitude is actualized even in ordinary activities as the entirety of the universe is always participating as every ordinary activity including walking and breathing and one's very body (without a trace of an 'I' or 'mine') is as much the universe/dependent origination in action and there is nothing outside of this boundless exertion/universe, where the purity and infinitude of the marvellous world experienced through being cleansed in all doors of perception is constant. (If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is: Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern. - William Blake)"

Non-doership is just one of the aspects of anatta, by itself it is not the anatta realization. (Thusness Stage 5: "...Phase 5 is quite thorough in being no one and I would call this anatta in all 3 aspects -- no subject/object division, no doer-ship and absence of agent...") One can experience non-doership during the I AM phase, or for some people even before the I AM realization. Hence non-doership is not equivalent with anatta realization.
Although the aspect of non-doership itself does not indicate the realization of anatta, this does not mean it is not important. Particularly, non-doership becomes clearly experienced when the John Tan's first stanza of anatta is penetrated and clearly realised. However, the first stanza of anatta is not merely non-doership, as explained in the conversation here. The first stanza of anatta conveys both absence of agent and non-doership, and not just non-doership. Commenting on someone's breakthrough, John Tan said, "More towards second stanza [of anatta], non-doership is equally important." and on someone else, "Non-dual but can't discern clearly the difference between conventionalities and ultimate. Did it talk about natural spontaneity? [In] The 2 stanzas of anatta, the non-doership will lead to natural spontaneity. Currently it is talking about freedom from observer and observed, but the second part of realising appearances are just empty clarity isn't there. Therefore effortlessness of vivid presence will not be possible without these 2 insights as base."

It is my estimate that when someone says they have broken through to no-self, 95% to 99% of the time they are referring to impersonality or non-doership, not even non dual, let alone the true realization of anatman (Buddhism's no-self dharma seal). For those that claimed insight into no-self, I usually ask them to check their experience against this:

"What is experiential insight
👍

Yin Ling:

When we say experiential insight in Buddhism,
It means..
A literal transformation of energetic orientation of the whole being, down to the marrow.

The sound MUST literally hears themselves.
No hearer.
Clean. Clear.
A bondage from the head here to there cut off overnight.
Then gradually the rest of the 5 senses.

Then one can talk about Anatta.

So if for you,
Does sound hear themselves?

If no, not yet. You have to keep going! Inquire and meditate.
You haven't reach the basic insight requirement for the deeper insights like anatta and emptiness yet!

Yin Ling:

Yin Ling: "Realisation is when

This insight goes down to the marrow and you don't need even a minute amount of effort for sound to hear themselves.

It is like how you live with dualistic perception now, very normal, no effort.

Ppl with Anatta realisation live in Anatta effortlessly, without using thinking to orient. It's their life.

They cannot even go back to dualistic perception because that is an imputation, it js uprooted

At first you might need to purposely orient with some effort.

Then at one point there is no need.. further along, dreams will become Anatta too.

That's experiential realisation.

There's no realisation unless this benchmark is achieved!"

.....
"Soh:
what is important is that there is experiential realisation that leads
to an energetic expansion outwards into all the forms, sounds, radiant
universe... such that it is not that you are in here, in the body,
looking outwards at the tree, listening the birds chirping from here
it is just the trees are vividly swaying in and of itself, luminously
without an observer
the trees sees themselves

the sounds hear itself
there is no location from which they are experienced, no vantage point
the energetic expansion outward into vivid manifestation, boundless, yet
it is not an expansion from a center, there is just no center
without such energetic shift it is not really the real experience of no
selfxabir Snoovatar" - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/12/the-difference-between-experience-of.html

Labels: Anatta, Yin Ling | "

Also.. "Sound hearing themselves, sights see themselves" etc
Thats just nondual. A state of no mind. This is not yet the realisation of anatman.
Whats more important is the realization of anatta as a dharma seal and which sees through the referents of inherent view
As I wrote before:
"Mr JD, regarding your question:
Not so. Recently I wrote to someone:
Just yesterday someone at the I AM phase told me, he said "I have a hard time seeing foreground [appearance] as "awareness." Probably just equating "awareness" and "background" in my mind." I told him thats because he has some definition of awareness that is blocking him. He told me "So forget definition of awareness and just see the radical aliveness of "foreground." That is enough, yeah?" I told him "No, not just forget definition of awareness. You need to deeply look into it, challenge it, investigate it". I also sent him some texts I sent to another person earlier and said "Having an experience without background [as an experience of no mind] is not the same as realizing there never was a background subject or a seer or a seeing besides or behind the seen. The latter must arise as a realization. So you need to analyse in direct experience.
Khamtrul Rinpoche on the realization of anatta in the Mahamudra text:
"At that point, is the observer—awareness—other than the observed—stillness and movement—or is it actually that stillness and movement itself? By investigating with the gaze of your own awareness, you come to understand that that which is investigating itself is also no other than stillness and movement. Once this happens you will experience lucid emptiness as the naturally luminous self-knowing awareness. Ultimately, whether we say nature and radiance, undesirable and antidote, observer and observed, mindfulness and thoughts, stillness and movement, etc., you should know that the terms of each pair are no different from one another; by receiving the blessing of the guru, properly ascertain that they are inseparable. Ultimately, to arrive at the expanse free of observer and observed is the realization of the true meaning and the culmination of all analyses. This is called "the view transcending concepts," which is free of conceptualization, or "the vajra mind view."
"Fruition vipashyana is the correct realization of the final conviction of the nonduality of observer and observed."
What Khamtrul Rinpoche said above is not just mere experience. It sees through the conventions and analysis and realized the emptiness of these conventions.
In buddhism, non analytical cessations like states of no-mind and samadhi does not liberate. Only analytical cessation based on wisdom that penetrates and sees through the wrong view of inherent existence is able to liberate. The prajna wisdom that realizes the dharma seal of anatta, dependent origination and emptiness.
——

In the past, many years ago, I visited a Zen center in Geylang many times, whose master is a very famous Korean Zen master with many established dharma centers throughout the world, who passed away in the early 2000s. I found his

writings quite resonating because he was able to express simply and articulately the state of no-mind. I read many books by him. He even said things like, "your true self has no outside, no inside. Sound is clear mind, clear mind is sound. Sound and hearing are not separate, there is only sound.", and so on.

However I was dismayed to find out later that he was having the experience of no mind but the view of one mind, meaning that he has not had the realisation of anatman that penetrated the view of inherent existence. As a result, despite his nondual experience, he was still unable to overcome the view of an inherently existing one substance modulating as many, which is the view of substantiated nonduality (nondual based on substance or essence view). I only realised this after reading in more details his views and writings and found an article where he expressed that Dharma-nature is the universal substance which everything in the universe is composed, is an unchanging substance that is formless like h2o but can appear as rain, snow, fog, vapor, river, sea, sleet, and ice, and everything is different forms of the same universal and unchanging substance.

It is clear to me that he experiences nondual and no-mind, but what he said above is still precisely reifying an ontological, universal, one, indivisible and unchanging source and substratum that is the "one without a second" manifesting as many. This is having a view of inherent existence pertaining to a metaphysical source and substratum even though it is nondual with phenomena.

I informed John Tan the above in 2018 and he replied, "To me yes. Mistaken experience due to lack of view. That is Zen's problem imo. No mind is an experience. Insight of anatta must arise, then refine one's view." (This is a general trend but there are many Zen masters with clear view and deep realisations too)

Another American Zen writer, whose books I have enjoyed reading and found to be quite resonating in many ways, because he was able to express the experience of no-mind and what I call Maha total exertion. He wrote that the Buddha mind is mountains, rivers, and the earth, the sun, moon, and stars. And that "In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe. The heat kills you, and there is only heat in the whole universe. The fragrance of incense kills you, and there is only the fragrance of incense in the whole universe. The sound of the bell kills you, and there is only "boooong" in the whole universe..." This is a good expression of no mind.

However, later on, upon further reading, I was disappointed to find out that he is still lacking realization into anatman, and hence did not go beyond the view of one mind yet having no mind experience. He continued to assert that "Objects of mind come and go in an endless stream, contents of awareness arise and cease – mind or awareness is the unchanging realm in which objects come and go, the immutable dimension wherein the contents of awareness arise and cease", and although he sees awareness as unchanging while all phenomena are changing, he insists awareness is nondual with phenomena: "In short, reality is nondual (not-two), thus everything in reality is an intrinsic aspect or element of that one reality."

It is clear that despite his nondual experience up to no mind, the view of inherent existence is very strong, and subtly dual. The desync between view and experience persists. It is having the atman view of an unchanging and inherently existing one reality yet being nondual with everything. I could go on and on and cite countless other teachers and practitioners, whether Buddhist or non-Buddhist, that are having this problem, because it is very common.

This is why anatta is not just the experience of no-mind, or a nondual experience, or even the realisation of the non-division between subject and object, perceiver and perceived, hearing and sound. Many practitioners and teachers unfortunately mistaken it to be so. It should instead be a realization that sees throughs, cuts through the view of inherent existence of a source/substratum/awareness. It is the realization that only vivid luminous manifestation knows and rolls without ever a knower or an agent, much like there is no wind that is the agent of blowing or lightning that is the agent of flash (both are just dependent designations and mere names），and also there is no ontological or metaphysical essence that exists in any way or form.

So after breakthrough from I AM to nondual, it is crucial to get out of "one substance" view and phase through the realization of anatman. Even this is just a start.
In recent weeks more people realized anatman in my blog and I have been guiding them into deeper insights into dependent origination and emptiness. However, genuine insights of emptiness and dependent origination cannot be understood without deep understanding of our consciousness, our empty clarity. I generally do not confuse people too much on dependent origination and emptiness until they are thoroughly clear about the realization of anatta through the two stanzas, the 2 authentications of anatta, because that is the base. Everything is empty of inherent existence but vividly clear and radiant, everything appears because it is all radiance of clarity. Therefore to have deep insight, the direct authentication of one's radiance and clarity is crucial. Anatman realization is key.
In the first stanza, the background subject, agent, watcher, doer is seen through, everything is spontaneous arising. In the second stanza, seeing is just the seen, one's radiance clarity and presence-awareness is directly authenticated as all appearances, as all mountains, rivers, the great earth.
Both stanzas are equally important. Lacking this direct authentication of radiance as all vivid appearance, this powerful taste and insight of all transience as Presence-Awareness, is not what I call an authentic realization of anatman. It can be either an intellectual understanding, or still skewed towards non-doership, not yet nondual and anatta. Yet even if one has the realization of awareness as vivid appearance, it can still fall into substantialist nondual, so one must be careful to deepen insight and see through any remaining views and sense of an inherently existing and unchanging awareness.
The two authentications of anatta are like what I wrote earlier, "Stanza 1
There is thinking, no thinker
There is hearing, no hearer
There is seeing, no seer
Stanza 2
In thinking, just thoughts
In hearing, just sounds
In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.
This must be recognized as a dharma seal. The insight that "anatta" is not merely a stage but the very seal of dharma must arise to progress further into the effortless mode. In other words, anatta is the nature of all experiences and has always been so—there is no "I." In seeing, there is only what is seen; in hearing, only sound; and in thinking, only thoughts. No effort is required, and there has never been an "I."

Therefore, it is important to emphasize anatta as the realization of a dharma seal—in seeing, only the seen appears, with no underlying seer. This is not merely a stage where the sense of a seer dissolves into mere appearances; such a stage may occur without the prajñā wisdom that penetrates and sees through the illusory construct of an internal reference point, the notion of an inherently existing perceiver. Experiencing no-mind is not particularly difficult or uncommon, yet truly realizing anatta is much rarer—even though it is only the beginning on the path to Buddhahood. Many focus on the experience, missing the clarity needed to discern the differences. It is rare to find practitioners and teachers who have truly realized anatta. Most people with nondual experiences take "in the seen, only the seen" as simply a state of no-mind, rather than the more profound realization that perceives the fundamental emptiness of a self, a perceiver, or any independent agent, or an ultimate awareness, perceiving, or a perceiver that exists apart from manifestation. In truth, there has always never been a seer nor an inherently existing seeing or awareness apart from what is seen/sensed/cognized, and this is a truth that is to be directly realized as always already been the case, not a transient stage of experience."

It's late here and this post is getting way too long and I will address some of your issues regarding non-doership in a separate post tomorrow.

—-

The poster replied:

Oh my world..

I am lost for words right now. I'll try to reply properly when all this has sunk in a bit. You do actually understand. You describe other experiences I have had as well, or glimpses and even "suspicions". I very much look forward to read what you have to say about the issues on non-doership. You have no idea how grateful I am for this. Or.. perhaps you do, actually. I have read it twice now, and I will read it again. Wow.

I think I should read your guide as well. I just scrolled through the table of content and it looks very interesting.

Thank you so, so much!

The next day, I wrote more:

More replies:

After describing the different facets of self/Self and no-self/Self, I'll dwell a little into the pitfalls and misunderstandings of non-doership and no-self.

Someone who goes through non-doership experiences spontaneity and a sense of freedom to a certain degree, yet it often comes with a great deal of confusion that only gets cleared up with deeper insights or pointers.

One possible pitfall is that one could end up with a confused understanding of no-self and non-action.

I wrote this in Facebook in reply to a friend Din Robinson to whom Thusness wrote his "7 stages of experience" (originally 6) in 2006:

Din: "as soon as you take any action or any need for training, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space, not that there's any wrong with that!"

My reply:

This is not true. This is as ridiculous as saying "as long as you take any action to keep fit, such as going to gym, then you

are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

or

"as long as you take any action to pass your exams, such as studying hard, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

or

"as long as you take any action to survive, such as eating and sleeping, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

or

"as long as you take any action to cure your disease, such as seeing the doctor, then you are perpetuating the myth of a "you" that exists in time and space"

No-self/Anatta is not about denying thinking, action, carrying water and chopping wood... and this is the key difference between genuine anatta insight from dualistic conceptual understanding. The very notion that "action" and "intention" implies, or necessitates, an "actor", and therefore for non-action the intentions and actions must also cease, is precisely using dualistic thinking to understanding anatta...

Action never required a self (in fact there never was a self or a doer apart from action to begin with: only a delusion of one), and action does not need to perpetuate the myth of a self. The myth of a self is not exactly dependent on action or lack thereof. Sure, action that arises out of the dualistic sense of actor/act where there is an "I" trying to modify or achieve "that" is a form of action produced by ignorance. But not all actions necessarily arise out of an underlying sense of duality. If all actions arise out of a sense of duality, then after awakening one will just die as he cannot even feed himself.

When one is operating with a dualistic way of understanding, one thinks that action implies a self that is doing an act, and one thinks that non-action implies that the self ends with the action. But genuine insight into non-action is simply the realization that never was there a real actor behind action, so there is always in acting just that action - whole being is only the total exertion of action, and this is always already the case but not realized. That is true non-action - there is no subject (actor) performing an act (object).

Futhermore: The myth of a self is not dependent on practice and lack thereof. (Oh but, 'right practice' and 'contemplation' does a lot to deconstruct that myth!) The myth of a self is however dependent on ignorance, and only wisdom ends that ignorance, just like turning on the lights lead to the natural cessation of irrational fear and thinking of monster in the dark room by a child.

There is always only action without a doer. No doer does not deny action, it denies agency, and realization of such leads to the direct, immediate, experience of total exertion/total action where doer/deed is refined till none in one whole movement. There is nothing passive about non-action. Non-action is simply action without self/Self. All actions performed without sense of self/Self is in fact non-action. Without the subjective pole (actor), the objective

pole in contrast to the subject (being acted upon) is also automatically negated. Yet clearly, the total exertion - pure action... goes on.

Dogen calls this practice-enlightenment. You do not practice For enlightenment (as some future goal separated from you). Your very practice of actualizing insight of anatta itself is practice-enlightenment. Sitting down is practice is actualization is Buddha-nature is enlightenment. Shitting too can be practice/actualization and that very act is Buddha-nature is enlightenment. Your very practice/actualization/act of just sitting, hearing the wind blowing, sight of scenery, walking on the street, chop wood carry water (without any delusion of self/Self) - that itself is practice-actualization-enlightenment, that is the total exertion where entire being is just entire sound, entire scenery, entire action.. This is non-dual practice and non-dual action.

2) A misunderstanding of no-self leads to a fatalistic and deterministic idea that negates or misunderstands causality and dependent origination. No-self in Buddhadharma is based on the understanding of dependent origination. But dependent origination should not be misunderstood as fatalism or with the idea that 'nothing can be done to accomplish things'.

It would be erroneous if a doctor realizes there is no self, therefore, tells his patients that all diseases are kind of fated or predetermined and so one should just passively surrender to the flow of things and just see what happens. Of course that is just silly. They should be dealt with, quickly and actively. But they are dealt with not via attempting to exert control or hard will via by the false notion of agency (sickness can't be cured merely by trying to will or control it out of existence - there are so many dependencies involved). They are dealt with via seeing its dependent origination and treating its dependent origination in a non-inherent way. Likewise the Buddha is like a great doctor that completely discerns our disease and the cure to our disease, and this is how through discerning dependent origination he taught the four noble truths: the truth of suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the path that ends suffering (which is the noble eightfold path).

Also, as John Tan/Thusness said many years ago:

"Nihilistic tendencies arise when the insight of anatta is skewed towards the no-doership aspect. The happening by itself must be correctly understood. It appears that things are accomplished by doing nothing but in actual case it is things get done due to ripening of action and conditions.

So the lack of self-nature does not imply nothing needs be done or nothing can be done. That is one extreme. At the other end of extreme is the self-nature of perfect control of what one wills, one gets. Both are seen to be false. Action + conditions leads to effect."

3) Are you aware of the seven factors of awakening taught by the Buddha? They are mindfulness, investigation, energy, rapture, tranquility, stability of mind, and equanimity. This is how we should cultivate in our practice and also gauge where our practice is at. These are the factors to be cultivated, that leads to awakening and liberation. This means our practice should make us joyous, radiant, bright, aware, tranquil, calm, focused, with energy, have deeper insights, and so on. These positive qualities of mind naturally grow more and more as we practice. But if instead we become more and more like a zombie, more and more lethargic and demotivated, that means something is going wrong in our direction and we should investigate that and correct it. After maturing of anatta one feels great energy coursing through one's body and even one's complexions naturally radiates the joy and luminosity that is experienced.

I remember one of the first things John Tan/Thusness asked someone many years ago after that person described certain insight of no-self and non-doership, he asked, "has zealous energy arisen?" and commented, "Advisable to bring the insight of anatta into the active mode."

So it is good to know that there is the passive and active mode of no-self .

There is the passive way of non-doership where one just let things happen on its own, but this is often coupled with a sense of dissociation because one's level of insight has not reached into non-dual level yet. Even after anatta non-duality, it often takes some time to mature that insight and experience such that anatta enters into total action and total exertion. You remember what I said about Michael Jackson? He danced until all sense of self is forgotten into 'just the dance'. Notice that he wasn't sitting cross-legged in lotus posture, he was totally engaged. The people doing dangerous sports also often report entering the zone and forgetting the self into a state of complete unity with their action and environment because any missteps can mean death, and it is this heightened state of aliveness and ego-death in that moment of total engagement in activity that is also itself the allure of engaging in such activities. But alas, all these are but passing peak experiences since they have not realised anatta. It is not necessary to engage in extraordinary feats to achieve such states of peak experience, the realisation of anatta turns the ordinary and mundane activities of daily living into marvelous activities of buddha-nature and total exertion.

However all these people described above are not just experiencing a 'passive experience of non-doership' -- yet their sense of self is completely dissolved. What's the difference? They're not just 'passively watching things unfold on its own'. Far from merely watching things float by with passive disinterest from behind as some sort of dissociated watcher... They are totally focused, totally in the zone, totally engaged with their whole being/body-mind and their intentions in their action, till the gap between actor and action, doer and deed, observer and observed is refined till none, into that very activity itself. It is like the dissolution of subject/object not just in passively experiencing a sound without hearer or sight without seer, but also in that very full engagement of action without a separate actor. That is true non-action, which is not literally passive inactivity but non-dual action, action without the sense of self, or one's whole being is the action. It is total engagement in action without sense of self, not only without the sense of a doer, but also without the sense of being a passive watcher.

As I said earlier, once realization of anatta arises, non-duality becomes the natural state and is realised to be always already the case. Initially after insight one may still be prone to experiencing non-duality in a state of passivity -- just relaxing and letting the sensory experiences and events just arise in a non-dual state, experiencing no-self in a state of passivity like just enjoying the scenery to the point of completely forgetting the self in the vivid brilliance or luminosity of the scenery, the sounds, the sensations and aromas, etc -- this time it is effortless and natural, without entry or exit -- for one realizes that in seeing, seeing is just colors without seer, and hearing is just sounds without hearer.

And yet mature insight into anatta also allows us the path to completely and gaplessly engage in actions to the point of dissolving all sense of self in that activity. The last stage of the ten oxherding pictures of Zen is called 'entering the marketplace'. The experience of total action/non-action/non-dual action is basically sort of like being in the zone as mentioned above, but the importance is realizing and actualizing this as a natural state in all activities, and that is only possible after realising anatta. After realising anatta (and not just non-doership), it is very natural and effortless to completely engage in activity to the point of leaving no trace of self and fully actualizing your true nature as that very activity. This is heavily emphasized in Zen, but even basic Theravada teachings can get you there if understood well -

- https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2012/10/total-exertion_20.html - I discussed a conversation I had with a Zen master and this might interest you.

This non-dual action eventually matures into total exertion, which is emphasized in certain teachings like Soto Zen and Zen Master Dogen. Total exertion is like when you are eating, the whole universe is eating. When you walk, the whole sky and mountains walks with you. At this point, in every mundane experience and activity, you experience the infinitude of the universe exerting as that activity.

Thusness: "[Total] Exertion is after the realization of seamless interdependence, the practitioner feels the universe giving its best to make this moment possible. Read the dogen of rowing the boat."

Dogen: "Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise the sails, row with the oar, and steer. Although you row, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat you couldn't ride. But you ride in the boat and your riding makes the boat what it is... When you ride in a boat, your body and mind and the environs together are the undivided activity of the boat. The entire earth and the entire sky are both the undivided activity of the boat."

"With going the boundless sky goes, with coming the entire earth comes. This is everyday mind."

Now, if you mature your insights to the point of true non-action and total exertion, you will not end up in a state of dissociation, passivity and lethargy. Instead, one lives life to its fullest, literally -- in all areas of life, fully alive, fully engaged and yet non-attached.

My impression from your post is that you are experiencing non-doership but with a sense of dissociation, along with some confusion. But if you progress in insights and practice in accordance with the AtR guide, or find a good Zen master (there are many good ones especially from the Soto Zen/Dogen's lineage) that can lead you to total exertion, your problems will be solved. You will come to experience whatever I said in this thread.

As John Tan/Thusness said before:

"When anatta matures, one is fully and completely integrated into whatever arises till there is no difference and no distinction.

When sound arises, fully and completely embraced with sound yet non-attached. Similarly, in life we must be fully engaged yet non-attached" - John Tan/Thusness

"Actually there is no forcing. All the 4 aspects in I AMness are fully expressed in anatta as I told you. If aliveness is everywhere, how is one not to engage... it is a natural [tendency] to explore in [various] arena[s] and enjoy in business, family, spiritual practices... I [am] involve[d] in Finance, business, society, nature, spirituality, yoga... 🤣🤣🤣. I don't find it efforting... You just don't have to boast about this and that and [just] be non-dual and open." - John Tan/Thusness, 2019

"Just met a friend yesterday who recently started meditating. His girlfriend joked that he might be becoming a monk. I told him that besides the daily sitting meditation (which is very important even after anatman realization, let alone

before - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/how-silent-meditation-helped-me-with.html), practice is mostly and very much in daily life and engagement rather than in some remote region in the mountains, it is about living a life in the marketplace that is spontaneously beneficial for oneself and others around, and joyful, rather than one that is miserable. It is fully engaged and free.

Zen Master Bernie Glassman said,

"At its deepest, most basic level, Zen—or any spiritual path, for that matter—is much more than a list of what we can get from it. In fact, Zen is the realization of the oneness of life in all its aspects. It's not just the pure or "spiritual" part of life: it's the whole thing. It's flowers, mountains, rivers, streams, and the inner city and homeless children on Forty-second Street. It's the empty sky and the cloudy sky and the smoggy sky, too. It's the pigeon flying in the empty sky, the pigeon shitting in the empty sky, and walking through the pigeon droppings on the sidewalk. It's the rose growing in the garden, the cut rose shining in the vase in the living room, the garbage where we throw away the rose, and the compost where we throw away the garbage. Zen is life—our life. It's coming to the realization that all things are nothing but expressions of myself. And myself is nothing but the full expression of all things. It's a life without limits. There are many different metaphors for such a life. But the one that I have found the most useful, and the most meaningful, comes from the kitchen. Zen masters call a life that is lived fully and completely, with nothing held back, "the supreme meal." And a person who lives such a life—a person who knows how to plan, cook, appreciate, serve, and offer the supreme meal of life, is called a Zen cook."

"But why does a venerable elder such as yourself waste time doing the hard work of a head cook?" Dogen persisted. "Why don't you spend your time practicing meditation or studying the words of the masters?" The Zen cook burst out laughing, as if Dogen had said something very funny. "My dear foreign friend," he said, "it's clear you do not yet understand what Zen practice is all about. When you get the chance, please come and visit me at my monastery so we can discuss these matters more fully." And with that, he gathered up his mushrooms and began the long journey back to his monastery. Dogen did eventually visit and study with the Zen cook in his monastery, as well as with many other masters. When he finally returned to Japan, Dogen became a celebrated Zen master. But he never forgot the lessons he learned from the Zen cook in China."

- Zen Master Bernie Glassman" - Soh, 2019

"In Zen, enlightenment implies full integration into activities. Any lack of such insight is not 'enlightenment in Zen'." - John Tan, 2010

"My daily activities are not unusual,
I'm just naturally in harmony with them.
Grasping nothing, discarding nothing,
In every place there's no hindrance, no conflict.
Who assigns the ranks of vermilion and purple?
The hills' and mountains' last speck of dust
is extinguished.
[My] supernatural power and marvelous activity—
Drawing water and carrying firewood." - Layman Pang

An old Zen saying— "Before enlightenment, chop wood and carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood and carry water."

Also see: a conversation I had with a Zen master in 2012, Total
Exertion http://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/10/total-exertion_20.html

"What you said is very good. I was reminded of a discussion I just had with Thusness about a new book by Tony Parsons called "This Freedom".

I asked Thusness what freedom is. Freedom is not doing what one likes, that would be still self-view. It is also not just simply being unentangled within the paradigm of duality of subject/object, life/death division.
The realization of anatta and emptiness relinquishes the self and reified constructs, consequently artificial boundaries and hindrance are also dissolved.

When artificial constructs are dissolved, the natural, primordial and untainted are also spontaneously manifested in every engagement. If it is not, then one risks the danger of still being entangled in a non-dual ultimate and drowned in stagnant water. Hence there is a difference in understanding non-dual free from the framework of duality and the actualization of the non-dual realization as the spontaneity of action that is full of energy and compassion.

So as Thusness pointed out to me, freedom must be realized not simply as non-attachment but also as boundless expression that is full of life and power.

Therefore not only the path of non-attachment is seen clearly but the way of boundless compassion and powerful viriya (energy) must also be directly felt and lived. Not immobilized by artificial constructs and duality, action is natural and spontaneous; without self, there is no hesitation and obstruction.

If one only sees freedom as non-attachment, then one will have missed an enormous part of the experiential insight of anatta and will not understand why Mipham is so insistent on talking about the positive attributes of Buddha, yet not falling into the views of Shentong.

For example when Thusness asked me what fear is, my answer had mostly to do with the mental/psychological factors and attachment. However what Thusness want me to see is that fear is not only overcome by non-attachment but also by the feeling of unbounded life and energy.
Btw, do you do yoga or any form of energy practice?" – Soh, 2016

"And when you experience, a person will feel radiance bright. Means when you see him, you will find radiance bright, you know? Because once a person experience non-duality, there is no holding, there is just luminosity. There is just a pure sense of existence, of clarity, of all things. Somehow, there is an utmost joy and energy that flows from everywhere, that sustains a person. This is its nature." - John Tan, 2007,
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/p/normal-0-false-false-false-en-sg-zh-cn.html

I remember one of the first things John Tan/Thusness asked someone many years ago after that person described

certain insight of no-self and non-doership, he asked, "has zealous energy arisen?" and commented, "Advisable to bring the insight of anatta into the active mode."

Update 2025:

Due to the specific circumstances of the individual I was addressing this article to, I intentionally refrained from elaborating on further insights beyond the initial anatta breakthrough. Providing more information at that stage would have been overwhelming for someone who was still at the very beginning of their journey.
However, I want to emphasize that the insights described above, even after a genuine realization of anatman, represent just the beginning. Additional insights will naturally unfold over time. To further elaborate, I will cite some of the thoughts shared by John Tan:
"Anatta is allow recognition of appearances as one's radiance. But that is still not anatta proper without recognition of dependent arising.

So one can realize anatta on the aspect of the agency being a conventional construct that does not exist in the "experiencer experiencing" or "hearer hearing sound" or "seer seeing scenery" ...etc but still not realize dependent arising and it's implication and vice versa.

So anatta,
dependent arising and emptiness,
then both.

Then dependent arising and the relationship of nominal constructs and causal efficacy.

Then dependent arising and spontaneous presence.

And natural perfection.

All these must be clear.", "It [Soh: an initial breakthrough to certain aspects of no-self but not the definitive wisdom of selflessness taught by Buddha] can also be no self being resolved into monism.

It can also be selflessness and essencelessness yet have no insight that dependent arising is free from 8 extremes."
Soh on the related "Eight Negations":
ChatGPT translation
of http://www.masterhsingyun.org/article/article.jsp?index=37&item=257&bookid=2c907d4944dd5ce70144e285bec50005&ch=3&se=17&f=1 "The so-called 'Eight Negations' are: not arising, not ceasing, not permanent, not continuous, not one, not different, not coming, and not going. These Eight Negations primarily aim to dismantle the clinging to the inherent self-nature of sentient beings. In other words, the phenomena dependent on origination are inherently empty and unattainable. However, ordinary beings, heterodox practitioners, and those with some attainments fail to realize the emptiness of all phenomena. They persistently cling to the reality of things, from the common-sense reality to the metaphysical reality, unable to transcend their delusional views of inherent self-nature. These self-inherent views manifest in various ways:

- **In time:** Views of permanence and cessation.
- **In space:** Views of oneness and difference.

- **In the movement of time and space:** Clinging to 'coming and going.'
- **In the true nature of phenomena:** Clinging to 'arising and ceasing.'

These eight measures of arising and ceasing are the root causes of sentient beings' confusion and do not align with the Middle Way, which is free from all delusional views and conceptual fabrications. Therefore, Nagarjuna Bodhisattva established the 'Eight Negations' to eliminate all confusions of attainment and to reveal the Middle Way of non-attainment. As the ancients said:
'The wind of the marvelous doctrine of the Eight Negations sweeps away the dust of delusional thoughts and conceptual fabrications; the moon of correct insight into non-attainment floats on the water of the Middle Way of reality.'"

Also see: Dark Night of the Soul, Depersonalization, Dissociation, and Derealization

Quick pointers for each stage

"Now over the course of hundreds [or thousands] of years, there are voluminous scripts about this and that... what is important is just the essence... Meaning, if you go into emptiness teaching and dependent origination, just [focus on] the essence... treat it just like koan... there is no Zen koan like Madhyamaka that can allow us to penetrate so deeply. There is no koan like Dogen's total exertion that can convey the experience of this immensity of being "connected" in such a magical way...

To me, just these 4 pointings are sufficient: direct pointing to awareness, to anatta, to total exertion and emptiness. The rest is deepening your insights and realizations through encounter and devoted practices." - John Tan, 2017

"I have told you that to leap out of the conditioned mind, then intellect and be authenticated directly, koan is an effective tool.

...

Anatta is an even better koan. No self... the stanza will enable one to trigger the leap into clear seeing and effortless authentication in all manifestation. It is a fundamental shift from substantial view created by our grammatical structure." – John Tan, 2020

"You must have a keen eye, every cell must turn alive and "spirit", get it? The phases of insights are analogous to energy channels, every passing through must make you more marvelous till you become one creative expression, one mighty alive action, one spirited activity. Don't adulterate it with mind intellect and stain it with concepts... but it is so hard to transmit so for the eye to fully open. Often it is best to be in koan and observe the conditions with one's entire being..." - John Tan to me, 2013

"In the seen just the seen. But instead of just sound, because you realize it, it is wonderful... something very very alive. The spark of wonder. It is not something that is dull, like a samadhi experience. There is a lot of difference. So there is a quality that is like that in that experience.

吾有正法眼藏，涅槃妙心，实相无相，微妙法门，不立文字，教外别传，付嘱摩诃迦叶。

Seeing Mahākāśyapa's smile the Buddha said, I possess the Treasury of the Correct Dharma Eye , the wonderful heart-mind of Nirvana, the formless true form, the subtle Dharma gate, not established by written words, transmitted separately outside the teaching. I hand it over and entrust these encouraging words to Kashyapa.

He is referring to something very vibrant and alive. That you must directly cut through. Means it is an instant illumination, Realization, all the discursive thoughts and everything just ceases in that moment of illumination. But realization can realize many things. For example I want to teach you wu qing, they only teach you very minimum music, they do not teach you a lot of concepts... lets say you are of very high calibre, very high capacity, it is not something intellectual. They want you to feel with your entire being... that sound, tingggg... then (?) play the music, then you feel it, means you are able to feel with your entire body-mind, feel with your entire being. It is not something that is intellectual. So a person of high capacity is when the teacher find that he has this capacity to feel and understand directly, heart to heart, a cut through of all intellectual verbalization and understand directly. This is what we call a person of high capacity.

So that when we talk about non-dual it is not at a conceptual level, he can feel with his entire being this is non-dual, this is clarity, this is impermanence, this is non-arising. So a person of high capacity is like that. Otherwise, you go through step by step, that is like... sudden awakening. Gradual practice and sudden awakening.

不立文字，教外别传；直指人心，见性成佛。

> Not relying on words or letters.
> An independent transmission outside the teaching of the scriptures.
> Directly pointing to man's Mind.
> Awakening of one's (Original-) Nature, thereby actualizing one's own Buddhahood.

But this is not pointing out man's Mind. This is just.. first of all we have to understand Realization. Realization is something that is like that. That's why I said the eye of immediacy. The eye that feel sound as sound and understand it. This means you feel with your entire being, feel with your entire body-mind. Once the teacher understand and see that this student has the capacity to do this, then he redirect this entire wisdom eye, or the eye that is open back to itself to understand clarity. So when he communicates, it is not about intellectual level, he wants the whole of the essence raw, he hands it to you. He does not want to explain and explain, certain things cannot be explained. When you explain you are actually contaminating it. I am teaching you so much but it is all words. But can you taste it or not? So I cannot explain to you so much. Like keep asking you Phase 7 is what? Phase 6 is what? Phase 5 is what? Phase...

As a good teacher... That's why I said, this is raw, this is not written anywhere, you have to taste it yourself, first hand, not second hand. Then you understand. Then your entire body mind must be open, your whole being must be opened, you feel it... this aliveness. You understand? It's something that is spirit, something that is alive, it is not dead, it is not a piece of dead rock." - John Tan, 2013, [Transcript with Thusness - Heart of Mahakashyapa, +A and -A Emptiness](https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/p/a-conversation-with-john-tan-some-time.html) https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/p/a-conversation-with-john-tan-some-time.html

"...In Zen tradition, different koan were meant for different purposes. For example the experience derived from the koan "before birth who are you?" is not the same as the Hakuin's koan of "what is the sound of one hand clapping?" The five categories of koan in Zen ranges from hosshin that give practitioners the first glimpse of ultimate reality to five-ranks that aims to awaken practitioner the spontaneous unity of relative and absolute.

Similarly different techniques can also be devised to allow a practitioner to experience the different qualities of Awareness. The experience of "impersonality" is not the same as the experience of the "pristineness" of our nature; the experience of "oneness" is also not the same experience as spontaneity; the experience of non-dual without a subject and object split does not necessarily result in the thorough insight of anatta; the experience of anatta is also not the same experience when a practitioner thoroughly sees the emptiness nature of phenomena. Thus, the master that prescribes the medicine must have deep clarity and wisdom of the view, path, fruition and conditions of the students. It is not a one for all sort of medicine..."

- John Tan, 2009, Strength of Bonds and the Syncing of View, Path and Fruition

Realizing Awareness / I AM

1) Who am I? / Before Birth, Who am I? / Who is dragging this corpse along?
2) Without thoughts, tell me what is your very mind right now? - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/11/what-is-your-very-mind-right-now.html
3) Without using any words or language, how do you experience 'I' right now? (This may also lead to nondual)

Intensity of Luminosity

1) What is aliveness in this moment?

Non-dual

1) "Where does awareness end and manifestation begins?" or "Is there a border/dividing line between awareness and manifestation?"
2) What is the sound of one hand clapping?
3) Without language or words, how is I experienced?
4) Taken from https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.godrinktea.com/2009/03/how-can-i-speak.html
   T'aego was one of the great masters of the Korean Zen tradition. His wisdom was such that he was able to unify the Nine Mountains schools of Korean Zen into a single order (the Chogye Order, still the largest order of Korean Zen).

   He was a prolific writer of essays, talks, and poetry. Here's a poem for your consideration:
   How Can I Speak
   All phenomena are beyond names and forms
   The sounds of the streams and the colors of the mountains are closest
   What is closest?

You can only please yourself: how can I speak?

Commentary

T'aego's poem has a teaching direction, with each line functioning as a koan (Korean: kong-an). Here are questions that might arise from this poem:

1. What does "all phenomena are beyond names and forms" mean?
2. What does "the sounds of the streams and the colors of the mountains are closest" mean?
3. What is closest?
4. How can you speak?

In the Korean Zen tradition, students are often asked to respond to specific questions about a case or story. Some of the questions have a "wide gate," through which several types of answers might pass. Others have a "narrow gate," which would permit only a very precise answer. You might consider each line of T'aego's poem from this perspective.

You can learn more about T'aego in A Buddha from Korea: The Zen Teachings of T'aego, by J.C. Cleary

Anatta

1) John's 1st Stanza:

There is thinking, no thinker
There is hearing, no hearer
There is seeing, no seer

2) John's 2nd Stanza:

In thinking, just thoughts
In hearing, just sounds
In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.

3) Bahiya Sutta:

In the seen, there is only the seen,
in the heard, there is only the heard,
in the sensed, there is only the sensed,
in the cognized, there is only the cognized.
Thus you should see that
indeed there is no thing here;
this, Bahiya, is how you should train yourself.
Since, Bahiya, there is for you

in the seen, only the seen,
in the heard, only the heard,
in the sensed, only the sensed,
in the cognized, only the cognized,
and you see that there is no thing here,
you will therefore see that
indeed there is no thing there.
As you see that there is no thing there,
you will see that
you are therefore located neither in the world of this,
nor in the world of that,
nor in any place
betwixt the two.
This alone is the end of suffering." (ud. 1.10)

- Also see comments and article in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html

Mind/body drop

1) Does the body have a shape, border and weight?
2) What is "body"?

Total Exertion (+A)

1) "When you cook, there is no self that cooks, only the activity of cooking. The hands moves, the utensils act, the water boils, the potatoes peels ...here there is no room for simplicity or complications, the "kitchen" went beyond its own imputation and dissolved into the activity of cooking and the universe is fully engaged in this cooking." - John Tan, 2013
2) "Contemplate "does not meeting yet connected" of total exertion and dependent origination." - John Tan, 2017

Emptiness (-A)

1) "This moment ceases as it arises, is this moment arising or ceasing?" - John Tan, 2004 (?)
2) "30 years of practice and 23 years of kitchen life is like a passing thought.
   How heavy is this thought?
   The whereabouts of this thought?
   Taste the nature of this thought.
   It never truly arises." - John Tan, 2013
3) "Appreciate the vivid, lurid scenery in non-dual and ask,
   Where is this scenery?" – John Tan, 2016

Total Exertion and Emptiness

1) “I like your description of walking down a lighted hallway.

   Like while walking in a shopping mall, there is no self, just the full fluxing sensations forming the appearance of the “shopping mall”. Then when entering the car park, the entire fluxing sensations turn into a “carpark”. The taste of this wondrous fluxing appearance is beyond description.

   As for physicality and senses, they are simply conventional designations. In total exertion, all designated boundaries dissolved and the six senses seamlessly inter-permeate each other into one miraculous functioning. In the exertion of seeing for example, it is not only the eyes see; the ears see; the nose sees, the colors see. The entire body-mind-universe marvelously arise as this moment of vivid scenery. In this moment, there is no seer and no seeing, just the beautiful scenery.

   Look, appreciate and dwell deeply into it in non-dual and ask,

   Where is this scenery?

   Unlike sound, taste, thoughts and smell that vanish like evanescent mist, the scenery is vividly and obviously there, but where is it?

   Powerfully present, yet empty like reflection.

   Integrate the two taste and happy journey!” - John Tan, 2019

2) “Those were just some very casual sharing written on the spur of a moment, they were not well thought. Emptiness to me has another dimension if you wish to look into it.

   When there is not even a single trace of Self/self nor is there any sense of inner/outer division, experiencer and what experienced collapsed...

   At this moment there is just this vivid beautiful scenery, this bright brilliant world...all self arises

   At this point...

   Close your eyes....

   Voidness....

Relax and rest in this all-consuming awaring void, this clear non-dual Awareness standing alone as itself and of itself...

Then shift the focus to the breath...

Just the sensations of the breath...

Then the transparent dancing sensations...absolutely no mind, no body, no experiencer/experienced, no inner/outer division... borderless and boundless

Every moment is great and miraculous...

This must become natural to you first.

Then at this moment of appreciating maha suchness of the breath, the sensations, the entire scenery, the entire world...

Understand that they are **Empty**!

Experience the magnificence then deeply understand that they are empty but this Emptiness has nothing to do with deconstruction nor reification nor do I mean they are simply impermanent. So what is this Emptiness I am referring to?" - John Tan, 2013

3) "Why must there be "weather", "chariot"... when the notes formed by musical instruments disappear as they arise, how is it that "music" is heard?" – John Tan

Spontaneous Perfection

1) Niguma: Mahamudra as Spontaneous Liberation
2) Naropa - The Summary of Mahamudra
3) (Anybody think pointers at this stage like... no meditator, no object of meditation? I realize this at earlier stages can point out other stuff but here I think it can help dissolve the last vestiges of something that needs to be done and someone who needs to do something... or even "no or no goal, no attainment"?-hale.)

Regarding Zen Koans, here are some quotes from John Tan:

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
On zen koans, John Tan wrote in 2009,

“Yes Emanrohe,
That is precisely the question asked by Dogen that “if our Buddha Nature is already perfect, why practice?” This question continues to bother him even after the initial glimpse and that led him to China in search for the answer that eventually awaken his wisdom into the non-dual nature of Awareness.
Therefore we must understand in Zen tradition, different koans were meant for different purposes. The experience derived from the koan “before birth who are you?” only allows an initial glimpse of our nature. It is not the same as the Hakuin’s koan of “what is the sound of one hand clapping?” The five categories of koan in Zen ranges from hosshin that give practitioner the first glimpse of ultimate reality to five-ranks that aims to awaken practitioner the spontaneous unity of relative and absolute (non-duality). Only through thorough realization of the non-dual nature (spontaneous unity of relative and absolute) of Awareness can we then understand why there is no split between subject and object as well as seeing the oneness of realization and development. Therefore the practice of natural state is for those that have already awaken to their non-dual nature, not just an initial glimpse of Awareness. The difference must be clearly understood. It is not for anyone and it is advisable that we refrain from talking too much about the natural state. The 'natural' way is in fact the most challenging path, there is no short cut.
On the other hand, the gradual path of practice is a systematic way of taking us step by step until we eventually experienced the full non-dual and non-local nature of pristine awareness. One way is by first firmly establishing the right view of anatta (non-dual) and dependent origination and practice vipassana or bare attention to authenticate our experience with the right view. The gradual paths are equally precious, that is the point I want to convey.
Lastly there is a difference between understanding Buddha Nature and God. Not to let our initial glimpse of pristine awareness overwhelmed us. 🙂
Edited by Thusness 05 May `09, 10:35PM
“

- https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../thusnesss...

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
Thusness's Conversations Between 2004 to 2012
Thusness's Conversations Between 2004 to 2012

- 9h

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
More quotes on koan by JT from the past as I was explaining to someone:

John Tan:
“More by john tan:
Alejandro, I would separate non-arisen and emptiness from the luminosity. Imo, it's a separate pointing. The one hand clapping here directly points to the luminosity.
What is the way that leads the practitioner to “the direct taste”? In zen, koan is the technique and the way. The one hand clapping koan is the instrument that leads one to directly and intuitively authenticate presence = sound.
Let’s use another koan for example, “Before birth who am I?”, this is similar to just asking “Who am I”. The “Before birth” here is to skilfully lead the thinking mind to penetrate to the limit of its own depth and suddenly completely cease and rest, leaving only I-I. Only this I as pure existence itself. Before birth, this I. After birth, this I. This life or 10 thousand lives before, this I. 10 thousand lives after, still this I. The direct encounter of the I-I.
Similarly the koan of the sound of one hand clapping, is to lead the practitioner after initial break-through into I-I not to get stuck in dead water and attached to the Absolute. To direct practitioner to see the ten thousand faces of presence face to face. In this case, it is that “Sound” of one hand clapping.
Whether one hand claps or before both hands clap, what is that sound? It attempts to lead the practitioner into just that “Sound”. All along there is only one hand clapping, two hands (duality) are not needed. It is similar to contemplating "in hearing always only sound, no hearer".
As for the empty and non-arisen nature of that Sound, zen koans have not (imo) been able to effectively point to the non-arisen and emptiness of one’s radiance clarity.”

- 34m

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
JT:
“Liu Zhi Guan Zen koans relate more to the direct pointing of one's radiance clarity whereas mmk is about letting the mind sees its own fabrications and allowing it to free itself from all elaborations (non Gelug) or free itself from all fabrications (Gelug). The most crucial insight of both Gelug and non Gelug (imo) is to let the mind realizes the primordial purity (emptiness) nature of both mind/phenomena.
Although Mipham treated gelug's freedom from self nature as categorized ultimate, I can only tell you I disagree. Both are able to achieve their objectives (imo). In fact if you were to ask for my sincere opinion, I prefer freedom from self nature (Gelug) as if understood properly and with experiential insight, it will lead to both +A and -A of emptiness.
If we were to treat the conventional (conceptuality) as the cause of ignorance, it prevents some very valuable insights that will take probably a lot of time to detail out. I will not go too detailed into that.
In short seeing through intrinsic existence will similarly allow practitioners to see through conceptual constructs (non-conceptualities), see through duality (non-dual) and substantiality (essencelessness).

Phenomena lack of self-nature also lacks sameness or difference, therefore their primordially purity will likewise be realized and selflessness also results in natural spontaneity; yet because practitioners put freedom from self-nature at a higher order, they will not be bounded by conceptualities and can embrace the conventional fully."

- 33m

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Having said that john tan did deviced a "koan" as a pointer to emptiness:
"Now is not a container to him but rather a ground for him to land.
Say that there is
Share with him the post about daniel's post on anatta and emptiness.
Then say there is a related koan that I ask you to a direct taste of the emptiness of the "here and now" but requires one to hv direct experience of non-dual presencing:
Appreciate the vivid, lurid scenery in non-dual and ask,
Where is this scenery?"
"André, to me "no awareness" in anatta is like telling us not to stop moving air to experience wind so that we can experience the blowing directly, effortlessly and naturally.
Dependent origination is to explain the conventional relationship between wind and moving air to establish its validity conventionally and frees the inherent and dualistic rigidity.
Emptiness is very special, it is a koan. 😜
The convention "wind" is empty and non-arisen,
What is that "wind"?
Why express that it originates in dependence and is empty and non-arisen?"

-
- Reply
- 33m

(On the last point: also see Daniel's Post on Anatta/Emptiness)

Hale:
I love the pointers to draw out presence that I think could be used at most any stage is:
Are you alive? How do you know beyond words...? Stay there
Is there something going on or nothing? How do you know beyond words...?

Also something to draw out luminosity... probably best used after anatta is kyles username
"A sun that never sets"
Or from the bible lol... maybe just take out lord... Your sun will never set again, and your moon will wane no more; the LORD (dharmakaya) will be your everlasting light, and your days of sorrow will end.

Importance of View, Realization and Experience

Recommended Reading: **Experience, Realization, View, Practice and Fruition**
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/12/experience-realization-view-practice_16.html

"I taught you view, experience and realization so that you can clearly see. As for what attainment is not important. Many are confused with experience, view and the realization of view. Once you are clear, you can sort out many issues and the mind can rest." - John Tan, 2019

"Dry non-conceptualities means PCE [pure consciousness experience] without insight and wisdom. Without insight of how the conceptual mind affect experiences and wisdom of the nature of mind and phenomena.

There is the experiences, the view and the realization. So practice is not just about experiences, one must realise clearly what the view of anatta and emptiness is pointing to in real-time experiences. Essentially it is about understanding how reification from conceptualities confuse the mind leading to dualistic and inherent thoughts and the freedom from them into spontaneous perfection of natural condition." – John Tan, 2020

"4/12/2012 3:00 PM: John: Imo it is not possible to remove the sense of self by the path of practice alone, the view and realization is important. Tilopa's advice is only advisable after a practitioner realizes certain important aspect of the nature and essence of mind.That is what is meant by being 'natural'. What is the cause of contrived effort. It is easy to say the sense of self creates the 'efforting' but practitioner will need to have deeper insight then just saying that. Otherwise the mind is not willing to let go itself"

"The seven stages are not necessarily about attainments, although they are in a sense attainments. The crucial point however is realisation. Without certain crucial realisations, there is no breakthrough. There must be clarity about that.

The emphasis on AtR is on distinguishing and integrating view, experience and realization. Without clarity on this, there will be obstructions. Too many practitioners emphasize on certain aspects - such as skewing to experience only, or on the view only, for example.

Even to realise anatta is a dharma seal and not merely a state of no mind is rare, for example, and even that is just a start and not an end.

Although I should add: realisation in atr context isn't divorced from view and experience especially in later stages.

For example as John Tan said before, realisation (of anatta, emptiness) just means direct realisation of right view so that the view does not remain intellectual. Its not so much as "no view".

So to summarise: the crucial takeaway from atr is to have clarity on the view, realization and experience. Not so much to see the stages as a form of attainment. As a matter of fact the seventh stage stressed it should be understood as ongoing "practice enlightenment" rather than a static finality." - Soh, 2020

"What's important is realization. The 7 phases of realization as per JT map emphasizes the distinction of view, realization and experience. Realization is important for breakthrough.
With the correct realization comes the experience and possibility of stable and effortless experience of pure presence in its nondual, uncontrived, full-blown, empty and liberating way. Most crucial key is the anatta realization, and with that mature into two-fold emptiness and spontaneous perfection and self-liberation. But even before anatta, even for I AM, there is distinction between experience and realization.
On the other hand, having an experience does not indicate having realization necessarily. In such cases, experience fades in time.

The words of Jigme Lingpa:
Understanding is like a patch, it wears off
Experiences are like the mist, they fade
Realization is like space, unchanging" – Soh, 2021

"[2:48 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: When one over emphasizes non conceptualization as the ultimate goal, he is letting karmic blind spots sway his understanding.
[2:52 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: So as I have said many times, despite having experiences turned effortlessly non-dual and non conceptual post anatta, I am not into no view. Rather I am into direct authentication of right view.
[2:54 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[2:58 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: This however is not promoting conceptualization over non- conceptual experience. They support each other.
[3:00 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Why do I ask you what is the purpose of deconstruction? You need to know what exactly does deconstruction achieve. You have deconstructed mind, body and divisions...so what is this deconstruction about and what is the purpose?
[3:02 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Experience presence without boundary and artificial separation or fragmentation
[3:08 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Yes. To access directly presence without intermediary. Having direct access does not mean wisdom and insight will arise. But when you are able to to access the state of non-dual presence, you are able to authenticate the view so that you insight may arise.
[3:09 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[3:12 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: So the view, the experience and the realization.
[3:17 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Now what is dependent origination about? Is it relation between 2 things? If not what is it pointing at?
[3:26 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: It is pointing to the nature of this presencing appearance.. because we do not comprehend the nature of appearance we come up with the idea that things come into existence and abides somewhere for a moment or a while... but when we look into appearance, appearance is none other than the various conditions exerting, like for example the image on screen is dependent on eye, electricity, etc.. you can't say it has been created and is locatable somewhere. it is none other

than a seamless exertion just like chariot is none other than the parts dependencies functions

It is not relation between two things because the depending and depended are not one or two.. the vision is not vision of its own apart from eye.. eye is not eye on its own apart from vision.. it is the nature of this presencing vision to be dependent and non originating
[8:02 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Quite good.
[8:05 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: But DO must been seen and understood from conventional perspective. How it serves as antidote for the conventional fictions of the mind.
[4:05 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: https://youtu.be/BFebcvam2N0
[7:41 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Lol he speaks of the view, experience, realization
[8:01 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Seems like he enjoys the one hand clapping koan. There is no mirror.
[8:02 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah..
Labels: Deconstruction, Dependent Origination |"

"View is more important than practice. That's why we are Buddhist and not Hindus." "Meditation without a correct view is an incorrect meditation." - Lopon Malcolm Smith, post in E-Sangha in 2008 or prior. Of course, practice is also important but "Right View" is a forerunner in the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

"Your practice time is commendable. I am very sure that if you had realized right view, you will go very far.

While I agree that Malcolm (like all other practitioners) probably would wish he had more time to practice *[although Malcolm spent years in retreats, so his practice time was definitely more than most of us anyway]*, I am also sure he is very happy and satisfied that all his years of learning and studying the dharma has born fruit for him. It is not just an intellectual exercise for him, I'm sure.

For, as he said years ago and I fully agree,

"View is more important than practice. That's why we are Buddhist and not Hindus." "Meditation without a correct view is an incorrect meditation." - Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith

"Meditation is not foremost, realization is foremost;
If realization is not entered with confidence,
The meditator is merely meditating on a conceptual state,
The seeker is seeking with an afflicted clinging."

- kun tu bzang po che ba la rang gnas pa

However this does not mean meditation is not important.

"Malcolm (Loppon Namdrol) wrote:

Rongzom makes the point very clearly that Dzogchen practitioners must develop the mental factors that characterize the first dhyana, vitarka, vicara, pritvi, sukha and ekagraha, i.e. applied attention, sustained attention, physical ease, mental ease and one-pointedness. If you do not have a stable samatha practice, you can't really call yourself a Dzogchen practitioner at all. At best, you can call yourself someone who would like to be a Dzogchen practitioner a ma rdzogs chen pa. People who think that Dzogchen frees one from the need to meditate seriously are seriously deluded. The sgra thal 'gyur clearly says:

The faults of not meditating are:
the characteristics of samsara appear to one,
there is self and other, object and consciousness,
the view is verbal,
the field is perceptual,
one is bound by afflictions,
also one throws away the path of the buddhahood,
one does not understand the nature of the result,
a basis for the sameness of all phenomena does not exist,
one's vidya is bound by the three realms,
and one will fall into conceptuality

He also added:

Dhyanas are defined by the presence or absence of specific mental factors.

The Dhyanas were not the vehicle of Buddha's awakening, rather he coursed through them in order to remove traces of rebirth associated with the form and formless realms associated with the dhyanas." - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/09/dzogchen-meditation-and-jhana.html

"(8:06 PM) Thusness: Having the right view without right practice will not bear fruit.
(8:06 PM) Thusness: right view, right practice and then fruition." – John Tan, 2008

I have also heard from another Chinese dharma teacher say that even someone who realises Buddhadharma (first bhumi/stream entry) with very little practice, from the perspective of Buddhadharma far outshines a non-Buddhist practitioner with years and years of deep samadhi and practice under his belt.

Is this because this Buddhist teacher is biased to Buddhism? From my understanding, no. This is because you can be very deep in samadhi and practice, yet unable to have a very decisive breakthrough until realization of anatman and emptiness, which requires right view. Before that you can rest in Presence-Awareness or Clarity, but it does not go beyond Vedanta. Ramana Maharshi sat all day and night for years and years in caves in Nirvikalpa Samadhi --

absorption in the Pure Awareness of Being, and never left his seat, only surviving due to devotees feeding him food. Likewise John Tan ('Thusness'), my mentor, spent many years practicing Nirvikalpa Samadhi until his encounter with Buddhadharma led to his breakthrough. He is reclusive and does not like attention of people much less be a teacher, but he felt indebted to Buddha and left some writings as helpful pointers to others.

Without deep insight into anatman and emptiness, there is still this subtle knot of perception, this karmic propensity that is the source of identity and dualism and samsara. That requires clear insight to break-through. So it is this insight that dissolves the bond, which years and years of samadhi could not. This is why someone who awakens via insight and wisdom 'outshines'. And Buddha is very clear on that." – Soh, 2020

"You have a mindstream, which is a continuum of consciousness, but this mindstream is an aggregated, causal proliferation of discrete instances, much different than a fixed "soul" as an abiding entity.

The fetter of selfhood is the root of samsara, and as such, the conviction that you have a real self or soul is an obscuration. We do have a conventional identity or self that we can use in everyday life, but we suffer when we mistake this identity as something truly real.

"Right view" does involve a correct understanding of selfhood, the Ratnakūṭa Sūtra states:

Right view (samyagdṛṣṭi) is the abandonment of the view of that the aggregates are a self (satkāyadṛṣṭi).

And regarding the prospect of a self or soul apart from the aggregates, Vasubandhu states:

There is neither direct perception nor inference of a soul [ātman] independent of the aggregates [skandhas]. We know then that a real soul does not exist." - Kyle Dixon, https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/ip5yiz/the_soul_is_it_a_deal_breaker/g4i1zy0/?utm_source=reddit&utm_medium=web2x&context=3

"So don't say whose technique is the best... But are those [practitioners] seeing through [i.e. having realization]... you see the realization [i.e. of anatta, emptiness] is in line with all the [original scriptural] texts but when you look at the traditional techniques [i.e. the meditation techniques as taught in modern Buddhist traditions], you realize this lack. Either they emphasis on the experience or the view, but there is no insight at all. So like you said, I think my approach is the best... lol. But you see so many [practitioners] are now talking about it [the realization of anatta] after going through all the different traditional techniques. You also realized that the emptiness and chariot analogy and all Buddhist Mahayana emptiness sutras are talking about the insight of anatta extended... it is the same insight but brought to experiential taste... yet you do not see any emphasis at all [on having such realizations]... in almost all the traditions" - John Tan, 2018, Vipassana Must Go With Luminous Manifestation

[10:43 PM, 6/6/2020] John Tan: There are two folds to it. Any view is ultimately empty... But freeing one from constructs and conceptualization has a different meaning to me. Like when see through self, we realized anatta. It is not the freeing, but must also involves the arising insight and wisdom.

I think I mentioned I am not into without view. The freeing from seeing through self is not a form of "not knowing", contrary it is deep wisdom that allows one to understand our nature directly."

From Dharmawheel, Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith says Madhyamaka is not a simple minded "I have no view" proposition:

"gad rgyangs wrote:

He clearly says in the VV that he has no view to defend. Do you think he was wrong about himself?

Malcolm wrote:

He states in the VV that he has no propositions/thesis concerning svabhāva as defined by his opponents. He does not say he has no views at all. For example, he clearly states in the MMK that he prefers the Sammitya view of karma.

Your claim is similar to the mistaken assertion made by some who claim that Candrakirti never resorts to syllogisms, which in fact he clearly does in the opening lines of the MAV. What Candra disputes is not syllogistic reasoning in its entirety, but rather, syllogistic reasoning applied to emptiness.

Likewise, he clearly asserts the view in the VV that there is no svabhāva in phenomena. Madhyamaka is not a simple minded "I have no view" proposition.

...

"Madhyamaka is not a simple minded "I have no view" proposition."

...

gad rgyangs wrote:
then why does the MMK end thusly? MMK 27.30:
I salute Gautama, who, based on compassion,
taught the true Dharma for the abandonment of all views.

Malcolm wrote:
"All views" here is summarized as two in chapter fifteen: i.e. substantial existence and nonexistence."

"The purpose of the view is to open the mind up fully without background, duality and inherency. So that experience is fully open, direct, immediate and without boundaries. Chariot and its basis are not a cause and effect relationship, they originate in dependence." - John Tan, 2019

"The truth of the matter is that "pacification of views" is directly related to the realization of emptiness. If you have not realized emptiness, then you have no business talking about a lack of view, because you still perceive conditioned phenomena and are therefore cognitively endowed with "views." Those views can only be pacified through directly realizing non-arising.
For some reason you mistakenly believe that "no view" means something like withholding a view, but it has nothing at all to do with that." – Kyle Dixon, 2021

Krodha's more recent/most updated post on this matter in 2023:

https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/162teze/what_is_the_phrase_the_right_view_is_no_view/

"What is the Phrase the 'Right View' is 'No View'? : Buddhism (reddit.com)

level 1

krodha

.

19 min. ago

On the "absence of views":

An "absence of view" does not imply a refusal to engage in concepts, or choosing to remain indifferent and neutral, not taking a position so that one has "no views."

The actual meaning of abandoning "all views" [sarvadṛṣṭi] is defined in the *Ārya-mahāyānopadeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra,* which states:

Abandoning all views is entering into the middle way, seeing all dharmas as equal.

The "equality of dharmas" is directly related to the absence of characteristics [alakṣaṇa] that is revealed in the realization of emptiness [śūnyatā]. The *Āryākṣayamatinirdeśaṭīkā* describes the interrelation of these aspects of awakened insight:

The descriptions from the element of self [atmadhātu] up to the element of all phenomena [sarvadharmadhātu] are the nature of one taste in the ultimate dharmadhātu, emptiness. Since individual characteristics do not exist, all phenomena said to be "equivalent" since they are undifferentiated.

Therefore to actualize the "abandonment of views" one must realize emptiness, and through realizing emptiness, the absence of characteristics is directly known due to the absence of a would be inherent nature or "svabhāva" to possesses

said characteristics. At that time, because entities are realized to be non-arisen, the basis of imputation which was previously mistaken to be an object endowed with specific characteristics is recognized to be a heterogeneous array of appearances that do not actually constitute or create the entity they were previously misconstrued to characterize. In the absence of an entity, existence and non-existence, having no substantial referent, are undone and as a result all views (and characteristics) are exhausted.

In his *Mūlamadhyamakakārika,* Nāgārjuna clarifies that the pacification of views is contingent upon insight into emptiness whereby existent entities that are capable of existing and/or lacking existence are recognized to be unfounded. He likewise chastises those of "little intelligence" who assert otherwise:

Some of small intelligence, see existents in terms of "is" or "is not"; they do not perceive the pacification of views, or peace.

"Peace" here again is intended to illustrate an absence of characteristics, the *Ārya-tathāgatācintyaguhyanirdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra* states:

"Nirvana is peace" denotes actualizing the absence of characteristics.

Candrakīrti concurs in his *Madhyamakāvatāra:*

The absence of all characteristics is peace.

We can understand "peace" and "pacification" in general to be the import of such statements. The pacification of characteristics and therefore the pacification of views, resulting from an awakened and experiential knowledge of the nature of phenomena, emptiness free from extremes, the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā sūtra* states:

What is called "knowledge of all things" is the result of knowing one thing: the true nature of phenomena, which has the attribute of peace.

The only means to obtain "peace" is via the awakened insight that ascertains the absence of a core entity which possesses characteristics, the untenability of selfhood and the associated implications of a self. The *Samādhirāja Sūtra* states:

If the selflessness of phenomena is analyzed, and if this analysis is cultivated, it causes the effect of attaining nirvana. Through no other cause does one come to peace.

One may ask, how is such an insight possible? It is possible because all phenomena are innately empty and devoid of a svabhāva that possesses characteristics, however ignorance and affliction obscure that fact. The purpose of applying the dharma is to discover that hidden nature of phenomena that is always already the case, but is concealed by our delusion. The *Ārya-kāśyapa-parivarta-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra* is clear that emptiness and an absence of characteristics are innate attributes which only need be recognized:

Kāśyapa, moreover, the true discernment into dharmas of the middle way is not making dharmas empty with emptiness, dharmas themselves are empty; it is not making dharmas without characteristics with the absence of characteristics; dharmas themselves lack characteristics.

It is only our affliction which causes us to perceive entities that are endowed with characteristics, when in actuality no such entities have ever originated in the first place. The realization of emptiness is simultaneously the antidote to those afflictions, and the means by which the absence of characteristics is ascertained. The *Play of Noble Mañjūśrī Sūtra* states:

Afflictions are temporary, they cannot simultaneous with the realization of emptiness; they cannot simultaneous with the knowledge of the absence of characteristics and the absence of aspiration; they cannot simultaneous with natural luminosity.

Nāgārjuna states in his *Lokātītastava:*

You [the tathāgata] taught that those who do not realize that characteristics do not exist are not liberated.

And in closing it is important to bear in mind that because the referent to lack characteristics is exhausted, even the absence of characteristics is ultimately absent as a characteristic.

The *Anantamukhapariśodhananirdeśaparivarta* states:

Although the teachings conventionally refer to "the essence and nature of all phenomena," phenomena are actually devoid of an inherent essence or a nature. The inherent nature of things is that they are empty and lack an essence. All that is empty and devoid of an essence has a single [generic] characteristic: since phenomena are devoid of [specific] characteristics, their [generic] characteristic is complete purity, and thus by definition there is nothing to label as empty or essenceless. Since by definition there is nothing to label as empty or essenceless, no phenomena can, by definition, be labeled.

Bhāviveka states in his *Tarkajvālā:*

When that yogin dwells in the experience of nonconceptual discerning wisdom [prajñā] and experiences nonduality, at that time, ultimately, the entire reality of objects are as follows, of the same characteristics, like space, appearing in the manner of a nonappearance since their characteristics are nonexistent, therefore, there isn't even the slightest thing that is not empty, so where could there be emptiness?"

"As of now - Year 2019, about 12 years after the John/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment was first written by John, more than 30 people have realised anatta through encountering the blog, myself or John. I am glad that the blog and articles have been of a positive impact to the spiritual community, and I'm confident that it will continue to be of benefit to many more seekers in years to come.

It has come to my attention after all these years that despite the clear descriptions by John above, the John 7 Stages of insights are very often misapprehended. This is why further clarifications and elaborations are necessary.

Do refer to these articles for more commentaries by John on the 7 stages:

Difference Between John Tan/Thusness Stage 1 and 2 and other Stages
Buddha Nature is NOT "I Am"

Wrong Interpretation of I AM as Background
Difference Between John Tan/Thusness Stage 4 and 5 (Substantial Non-duality vs Anatta)
Two Types of Nondual Contemplation after I AM (On How to Realize Anatta)
Advice for Taiyaki (Pointers for Post-Anatta Contemplation)
+A and -A Emptiness (On the two experiential insights involved in John Tan/Thusness Stage 6)

For more pointers on how to investigate and contemplate to attain each of those realizations above, see Book Recommendations 2019 and Practice Advise

It is important to note that it is common to have certain insights into no-self, impersonality and non-doership, and yet it is not the same as the insight of John Tan/Thusness Stage 5 or even John Tan/Thusness Stage 4, as discussed in Non-Doership is Not Yet Anatta Realization. If you think you realised Anatta or Stage 5, make sure to check out this article, as it is often very common to mistaken non-doership, substantialist non-duality or even a state of no-mind for the insight of anatta: Different Degress of No-Self: Non-Doership, Non-dual, Anatta, Total Exertion and Dealing with Pitfalls

Furthermore, another common mistake is to think that the peak experience of no-mind (where any trace or sense of being a subject/perceiver/self/Self behind experience temporarily dissolves and what's left is simply 'just experience' or 'just the vivid colors/sounds/scents/taste/touch/thought) is similar to the anatta 'dharma-seal' insight/realization of John Tan/Thusness Stage 5. It is not the same. It is common to have an experience, but rare to have realization. Yet it is the realization of anatta that stabilizes the experience, or makes it effortless. For example, in my case, after the realization of anatta has arisen and stabilized, I do not have the slightest trace or sense of subject/object division or agency for about 9 years, till now, and John Tan reports the same for the past 20+ years (he realised anatta in 1997 and overcame the trace of background in a year or so). It should be noted that overcoming subject/object division and agency (which happens even at Thusness Stage 5) does not mean other subtler obscurations are eliminated -- the complete elimination of this is full Buddhahood (a topic that is discussed in *Traditional Buddhist Attainments: Arahantship and Buddhahood* chapter in Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind). That is natural after realization sinks in to replace the old paradigm or conditioned ways of perception, it's a bit like figuring out a picture puzzle and never unseeing it again. However this does not indicate an end or finality to practice, or the attainment of Buddhahood. Practice still goes on, it simply becomes dynamic and condition-based as stated in Stage 7, even Stage 7 is not a finality. This topic is discussed further in No Mind and Anatta, Focusing on Insight. It is also common to fall into the disease of non-conceptuality, mistaking that as the source of liberation and thus clinging to or seeking a state of non-conceptuality as the main object of practice, whereas liberation comes only through the dissolving of ignorance and views (of subject/object duality, and inherent existence) that cause reification, by insight and realization. (See: The Disease of Non-Conceptuality) It is true that reification is conceptual. But merely training to be non-conceptual is simply suppressing the symptoms while not treating the cause - ignorance (resting in non-conceptual presencing is important as part of meditative training but must go along with wisdom [insight into anatta, dependent origination and emptiness] as the natural ongoing actualization of anatta). For non-reification leads to non-conceptuality but non-conceptuality itself does not lead to non-reified perception.

So when insights into anatta, D.O. [dependent origination] and emptiness are realized and actualized, perception is naturally non-reified and non-conceptual. Furthermore we must see the empty and non-arising nature of all phenomena from the perspective of dependent origination. John wrote in 2014, "Be it Buddha himself, Nagarjuna or Tsongkhapa, none [of them] never got overwhelmed and amazed with the profundity of dependent origination. It is just that we do not have the wisdom to penetrate enough depth of it." and "Actually if you do not see Dependent Origination, you do not see Buddhism [i.e. the essence of Buddhadharma]. Anatta is just the beginning."

“John TanThursday, August 21, 2014 at 6:36am UTC+08
I am not into no view... but actualization of right view.

John TanThursday, August 21, 2014 at 7:03am UTC+08
We all know views are only provisional and are approximate of "reality" but some views are better representations of "reality" than others. I am not into "no view", that will lead us into taking "non conceptuality" as the goal of practice. I have no issue adopting "right view", "non conceptuality of view" to me simply means not to let "view" remains intellect and conceptual but have experiential insight and actualized it in daily activities.

...

John TanTuesday, December 30, 2014 at 6:21pm UTC+08
No what I mean is a view and a structure like that of "mere designation" to have a semblance of direct experience of 2 fold and total exertion. Then in each of the phase, to trigger the direct insight, use koan or short stanza for contemplation.

John TanTuesday, December 30, 2014 at 6:22pm UTC+08
So a practitioner will not have a desync of view and experience, there will be a smooth process.

...

John TanMonday, January 5, 2015 at 2:26pm UTC+08
Seeing through first how reifications arise and the deconstruction of these reifications in direct experience (anatta and 2 folds) and then how to correctly apply conventionality as a semblance to "what is".

...

John TanTuesday, January 6, 2015 at 9:12am UTC+08
Semblance because insight has not arisen.

...

John TanTuesday, February 3, 2015 at 8:56am UTC+08
Lol...actually I have always like Jax's relentless zeal in pointing out the ultimate is direct, immediate and beyond arbitrary concepts. Primordial suchness is free from all elaborations, natural and stainless. Like eating an apple, the taste cannot be conveyed; all concepts of ultimate are at best a semblance, a concordant mental image but I believe no one is contesting that. It is the no practice and unskillful presentation of the ultimate, ignoring two truths and seeing everything as conceptual designation is a nightmare. Phenomena are only realized to be absence and empty when sought and analyzed via dependent arising, otherwise it is amazingly real and vivid. No matter how direct, non-dual and non-conceptual, no experience survives ultimate analysis, when analyze always non-arisen and empty. There is no subsuming of subject into object or object into subject, no skewing to either poles; only always seeing the nature of whatever arises as empty and non-arisen when presented then phenomenon is free and liberating.

...

Look at what that appears quite substantial in experience, it is easier to contemplate like "the green color of my yoga matt" because the "green-ness" doesn't disappear...clearly it is "green" but is it? We keep contemplating and realized it isn't truly there at all. We must infer for non-conceptuality cannot bring us to that realization...there it is conceptual + non-conceptual to "awake" this insight of absence while in vivid presence. What most practitioner missed is they hold too tightly to non-conceptuality and therefore are denied of this realization. We then bring this taste to the entire scenery and ask where is this scenery... it must be in a non-dual of just scenery to bring this actual taste upon one's own empty clarity... then the whole entire experience turns illusion-like. Then we bring this to the more insubstantial phenomena like sound, sensation, scent...just one's empty clarity... Vividly there while absence...not being constantly dissolved.

It is a 2 mode (analysis via DO + non-dual no mind experience) of cognition into right contemplation as a practice..."

“It’s different contexts. Chad.

Practice as equipoise is non-conceptual.

Understanding the teachings in post-equipoise is often conceptual.

While not always the case, often the aversion many so-called “Dzogchenpas” have to concepts only ends up harming them.

If we understand that realizations and equipoise are always non-conceptual then we can approach this issue with conceptuality in the right context and frame it in a manner that will bring benefit to our practice.

Correct conceptual understanding and accuracy can only ever improve our practice. It cannot harm us.

Regarding the Kusali. As Sapan said, so-called kusalis are actually at a disadvantage, because of the three prajñās, they only possess the last, the prajñā of meditation. While the pandita has the advantage, because they possess all three prajñās, hearing, reflection and meditation, and have therefore severed all doubt."

- Kyle Dixon, 2020

"If your anecdotal insight deviates from the teachings then it is incomplete or erroneous."

- Kyle Dixon, 2021

"In Anguttara Nikaya Sutta 4.180, the Buddha taught the great authorities. He advised that when any monk says that such and such are the teachings of the Buddha, we should, without scorning or welcoming his words compare those words with the Suttas and Vinaya. If they are not in accordance with the Suttas and Vinaya, we should reject them."

"To some of you, Ānanda, it may occur thus: 'The words of the Teacher have ended, there is a Teacher no longer'. But it should not, Ānanda, be so considered. Indeed, Ānanda, that which I have taught and made known to you as the Dhamma and the Vinaya will be your Teacher after my passing away."

-- Mahāparinibbāna Sutta

"If he does not teach according to the words of the Buddha

even if he is a guru, one should remain indifferent. "

-- Sakya Pandita

Also as the Buddha stated in http://dharmafarer.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/40a.16-Ahita-Thera-S-a5.88-piya.pdf -- even famous teachers may have wrong views.

"This is where Refuge in the Three Jewels become very important -- because we should not rely on on our own ideas of the dharma, nor even what some other teachers might say about enlightenment, but rather we rely on the Buddha himself -- the perfectly enlightened one -- and the Dharma he taught as contained in the scriptures, and the Sangha -- which in this case refers to the Arya [awakened] sangha [community] -- the sangha [community] of the awakened noble ones that realized the Buddha's dharma. We rely on their teachings and dharma." – Soh, 2014, Soh's Journal and Notes on Spiritual Awakening . Article: The Benefits and Limitations of Teachers and Lineages

"In the buddhadharma, generally insight is informed by view.

If your view is undefined and messy, you generally won't fare very well in terms of experiential insights. Or you will manifest wrong views in the wake of insights. "

- Kyle Dixon, 2020

"My point is that people who reject conceptual understanding are simply shooting themselves in the foot for no reason.

...

Obviously.

Conceptual understanding does not produce non-conceptual wisdom.

It just refines the foundation for guiding wisdom in the right direction.

...

Brian Christopher Harris the map is not the territory, and I assume we all know that.

A more clear and refined map just allows one to explore the territory more effectively. Avoiding deviations and pitfalls. Etc.

...

Chad Foreman it's not that I think it's superior and necessary, I've just never met anyone with genuine realization that rejects conceptuality. Because they know it isn't a danger.

And generally those who reject conceptuality have very superficial experiential insight. They don't really have any insight and so they have to play this game where they deify non-conceptuality and marginalize conceptuality because it helps create this false facade of being a practitioner." – Kyle Dixon, 2020

Kyle Dixon: "krodha
10 points · 16 hours ago

Reading and study are both encouraged in traditional buddhadharma, they serve to sharpen the prajñā of reflection.

Padmasambhava actually admonishes those who reject study and reading:

Since you don't know what is needed in this life, study all the topics of knowledge! Ignorance is the darkest defilement: light the lamp of study and reflection! To teach that there is no need to study and reflect diminishes the already low-level of knowledge and increases the already present ignorance.

krodha
9 points · 16 hours ago

Concepts are considered a double edged sword, thus while useful in a conventional context, they can also cause issues.

The *Māyājālamahātantra* states:

Conceptuality is great ignorance, causing one to fall into the ocean of samsāra.

At the same time, concepts are necessary, as the Āryācharya Nāgārjuna states:

Without relying on convention, □the ultimate will not be realized, without realizing the ultimate, □nirvana will not be attained."

"Mr. J: Conceptualization is not being "rejected", its causes are exhausted and it ceases. However one should not "follow" and energize conceptualizing in practice. That is a universal Buddhist Dharma. Without that cessation of conceptualizing, samsara continues no matter what "you" realized.
Yesterday at 4:19pm · Like · 1

Kyle Dixon: In the absence of recognition, following or not-following conceptualization truly makes no difference due to the presence of affliction, which dominates one's experience either way. Conceptualization's cause (and foundation for proliferation) is delusion, so yes I agree that cause must be exhausted (i.e. the delusion of non-recognition must be resolved via the wisdom of recognition).

Ultimately conceptualization is the adulteration of vāyu (Tib. rlung) functioning in the body, and that being the case, 'conceptualization' i.e. imputation (in it's proliferating and perpetual form) arises through non-recognition, whereby it is then sustained by the compounded interweaving of habitual tendencies (and karmic propensities). It's rampant presence in most people's condition is actually an imbalance which can be calmed via practices such as śamatha (Tib. shiné), but even in balancing that energy (which results in the 'calm abiding' associated with a successful implementation of śamatha) the affliction which is the root cause of imputation remains unpacified. Therefore vipaśyanā is still required (as I know you've mentioned), but that vipaśyanā must be the undeluded insight of vidyā (rig pa), otherwise the fundamental cause of conceptualization is unresolved no matter how stable one's śamatha is. There are practitioners who claim to be able to remain without thought for extremely long periods of time, and that's all well and good, but that absence of conceptualization doesn't mean avidyā (ma rig pa) has been rectified, nor does it mean the ālaya (Tib. kun gzhi) has been pacified.

Therefore it isn't simply conceptualization which must end for samsara to fall, the entire foundation for conceptualization, mind, consciousness etc., must be severed, which is the ignorance of non-recognition. Conceptualization is indeed the direct ignorance which sets the 12 Nidānas of dependent origination into motion (and sustains them), however, conceptualization itself is the compounded result of preceding ignorance. Ergo, the mere suspension, pacification or cessation of conceptualization itself will not do the job, avidyā remains potent in the form of the latent traces which forego imputation. Only prajñā and vidyā can resolve the ignorance responsible.

I don't think anyone is suggesting that conceptualization is appropriate in practice nor is anyone suggesting that conceptualization is synonymous with practice. However, conceptualization is very appropriate (and necessary) while discussing the dharma in a group forum online.
Yesterday at 5:26pm · Like · 1

Logan Truthe: Neylug Rangjung tantra:
If the forever-present primordial wisdom of the dharmakaya is not realized even though you have practiced achieving stability in this profound path in the very state of conscious awareness free of conceptual elaboration, as soon as you pass away from this life, there are forces to propel you to the form realm and the formless realm; but with this alone it is impossible to achieve omniscient buddhahood.
Yesterday at 6:31pm · Edited · Unlike · 2"

It is also necessary to understand that the 7 stages are not rankings of 'importance', but are simply the order of how certain insights unfolded in John's journey, although I too have gone through the stages in pretty much the same order. Each realization in the John 7 Stages is important and precious. The realization of 'I AMness' should not be seen as being 'less important' or 'arbitrary' when compared with the realization of emptiness, and I often tell people to start with or go through the I AMness realization to bring out the aspect of luminosity first (for some others, this aspect will only be obvious in later phases of practice). Or as John said in the past, we should "see all as important insights to release the deep karmic conditioning so that clarity becomes effortless, uncontrived, free and liberating." The phases of realizations may not necessarily arise in the same order or linear way for each person, and one may need to cycle through the insights a couple of times for 'deepening' (see: Are the insight stages strictly linear?) Furthermore, as John said, "The anatta I realized is quite unique. It is not just a realization of no-self. But it must first have an intuitive insight of Presence. Otherwise will have to reverse the phases of insights" (see: Anatta and Pure Presence)

And as John wrote before, "Hi Mr. J, Despite all differences we may have about lower yanas, no practices needed, Absolute... I really appreciate your zealous attempt to bring this message into view and I agree with you wholeheartedly on this aspect of "transmission". If one truly wants this essence to be "transmitted", how can it be otherwise? For what that is to be passed is truly of different dimension, how can it be adulterated with words and forms? The ancient teachers are extremely serious observing and waiting for the right condition to pass the essence unreservedly and wholeheartedly. So much so that when the essence is transmitted, it must boil the blood and penetrate deep into the bone marrow. The entire body-mind must become one opening eye. Once open, everything turns "spirit", mind intellect drops and what's left is aliveness and intelligence everywhere! Mr. J, I sincerely hope you well, just don't leave trace in the Absolute. Gone!"

Also, it is very important to understand that having a conceptual understanding of no-self, dependent origination and emptiness is very different from direct realization. As I told Mason Spransy in The Importance of Luminosity, it is very possible to have the conceptual understanding of Thusness Stage 6 but lacking in direct realization. Days after that conversation he had certain breakthrough (see: Suchness / Mason Spransy). As Thusness pointed out in Purpose of Madhyamaka, if after all the analysis and contemplations of Madhyamaka (Buddhist emptiness teachings taught by Nagarjuna) one is unable to realize that the mundane is precisely where one's natural radiance is fully expressed, a separate pointing is necessary.

Many may wonder, why the need for so many phases of insights? Is there a way to reach liberation instantly? Some people find all these stages and information to be overly complex. Isn't truth something that is direct and simple? For the fortunate few (or perhaps, someone of 'higher capacity'), like Bahiya of the Bark Cloth, they were able to attain liberation immediately upon hearing a single verse of Dhamma/Dharma from the Buddha. For the majority of us, there is a process of uncovering truth and penetrating our thick layers of delusions. It is very common to get stuck at a phase of realization and think that one has reached a finality (even in earlier phases like John Tan/Thusness Stage 1), but are still unable to dissolve subtle identities and reification that cause clinging, thus preventing liberation. If one is able to penetrate by insight and dissolve all self/Self/identities/reifications at once, one may be liberated on the spot. But if (most likely the case) one does not have this capacity to penetrate all delusions at once, further pointings and phases of insights are necessary. As John said, "Although Joan Tollifson spoke of the natural non-dual state as something "so simple, so

immediate, so obvious, so ever-present that we often overlook", we have to understand that to even come to this realization of the "Simplicity of What Is", a practitioner will need to undergo a painstaking process of de-constructing the mental constructs. We must be deeply aware of the 'blinding spell' in order to understand consciousness. I believe Joan must have gone through a period of deep confusions, not to under-estimate it. :)" (Excerpt from: Three Paradigms with Nondual Luminosity)

For, as John Tan said before, "Though buddha nature is plainness and most direct, these are still the steps. If one does not know the process and said 'yes this is it'... then it is extremely misleading. For 99 percent [of 'realized'/'enlightened' persons] what one is talking about is "I AMness", and has not gone beyond permanence, still thinking [of] permanence, formless... ...all and almost all will think of it along the line of "I AMness", all are like the grandchildren of "AMness", and that is the root cause of duality." - John Tan, 2007

The stages are like a raft, it's for the purpose of crossing over, it's for the purpose of giving up our delusions and clinging, rather than for clinging on as some sort of dogma. It is a skillful means to guide seekers to realise their nature of mind and to point out the pitfalls and blindspots. Once realized, all the insights are actualized moment to moment and one no longer thinks about stages, and neither will one hold onto an ideation of having an attainment nor an attainer, nor somewhere else to get to. The whole luminous field of display is simply zero-dimensional suchness, empty and non-arisen. In other words, once the raft or ladder has served its purpose, it is left aside rather than carried up the shore. As John wrote in 2010, "In actuality, there is no ladder or no 'no self' whatsoever. Just this breath, this passing scent, this arising sound. No expression can be clearer then this/these obviousness. Plain and Simple!" But what John said here is referring to the post-anatta-realization actualization. It is easy induce a state of no-mind experience -- for example there are many stories about Zen masters giving a completely unexpected blow, a shout, a pinch on your nose out of a sudden, and in that moment of pain and shock, all sense of self and indeed all concepts are completely forgotten and only the vivid pain remains. This can induce what we call an experience of no-mind (a peak experience of no-self/no-subject) but should not be mistaken as the realization of anatta. However, anatta realization is what makes no-mind into an effortless natural state. Most of those teachers who have access to nondual experience that I've seen only express a state of no-mind but not the realization of anatta. As mentioned earlier, this topic is discussed further in No Mind and Anatta, Focusing on Insight and the fourth point of Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives. Hence, until the 7 phases are realized and actualized, the map is still very useful.

John also wrote many years ago commenting on someone discussing Dzogchen practice as the realization of the luminous essence and integrating it into all experience and activities, "I understand what he meant and but the way it is taught *(Soh: i.e. discussed by the person)* is misleading. It is simply non-dual experience and experiencing presence in both the foreground and background and in the 3 states *(Soh: waking, dreaming, dreamless deep sleep).* That is not realizing our true empty nature but our luminous essence... ...understand the difference between luminosity and empty nature *(Soh: luminosity here refers to the aspect of Presence-Awareness, and emptiness refers to the lack of intrinsic existence or essence of Presence/Self/Phenomena)*... ...Very often, people rely on the experience and not true realization of the view. The right view *(Soh: of anatta (no-self), dependent origination and emptiness)* is like a neutralizer that neutralizes dualistic and inherent views; by itself, there is nothing to hold. So realize what right view is pointing and all experiences will come

naturally. The right enlightenment experience is like what (Zen Master) Dogen described, not merely a non-dual state where experiencer and what's experienced collapses into a non-dual stream of experience. This I have told you clearly."

Lastly, I'll end with something John wrote in 2012, "You cannot talk about emptiness and liberation without talking about awareness. Instead understand the empty nature of awareness and see awareness as this single activity of manifestation. I do not see practice apart from realizing the essence and nature of awareness. The only difference is seeing Awareness as an ultimate essence or realizing awareness as this seamless activity that fills the entire Universe. When we say there is no scent of a flower, the scent is the flower.... that is because the mind, body, universe are all together deconstructed into this single flow, this scent and only this... Nothing else. That is the Mind that is no mind. There is not an Ultimate Mind that transcends anything in the Buddhist enlightenment. The mind Is this very manifestation of total exertion... wholly thus. Therefore there is always no mind, always only this vibration of moving train, this cooling air of the air-con, this breath... The question is after the 7 phases of insights can this be realized and experienced and becomes the ongoing activity of practice in enlightenment and enlightenment in practice -- practice-enlightenment."

Also, he wrote in 2012, "Has awareness stood out? There is no concentration needed. When six entries and exits are pure and primordial, the unconditioned stands shining, relaxed and uncontrived, luminous yet empty. The purpose of going through the 7 phases of perception shift is for this... Whatever arises is free and uncontrived, that is the supreme path. Whatever arises has never left their nirvanic state... ... your current mode of practice [after those experiential insights] should be as direct and uncontrived as possible. When you see nothing behind and magical appearances are too empty, awareness is naturally lucid and free. Views and all elaborations dissolved, mind-body forgotten... just unobstructed awareness. Awareness natural and uncontrived is supreme goal. Relax and do nothing, Open and boundless, Spontaneous and free, Whatever arises is fine and liberated, This is the supreme path. Top/bottom, inside/outside, Always without center and empty (2-fold emptiness), Then the view is fully actualized and all experiences are great liberation." In 2014, he said, "All 7 phases of insight can be realized and experienced, they are not verbiage. But perfection in terms of actualization in everyday life requires refining our view, meeting situations and dedication of quality time in anatta and total exertion. The problem is many do not have the discipline and perseverance."

“You have to distinguish between seeing "inseparability" of clarity and emptiness from seeing clarity alone. That is when Mipham is talking about clarity, he is referring to empty clarity which is not the same as seeing Clarity as ultimate. Like when I tell you awareness is natural and free, it does not mean there is another extra awareness other than sound, thoughts, sensations, colors, smells... In other words, there is ongoing awaring in the form of sound, sensations, hardness, softness, coldness, emotions... etc. No awareness... As such we have the issue of saying it cannot be said to be clarity nor other than clarity. To refine and have deeper insight of clarity, therefore requires a paradigm shift. Nothing is being transformed from this to that. Rather it is under what condition, this arises. And understand dependent arising is non-arisen to realize the nature of clarity/phenomena.” - John Tan, 2015

Soh wrote to someone after his realization of anatta,

“I see, that means your insight into the two stanzas of anatta should be clear without going much into the aspect of view. For now you need to spend quality time everyday to actualize anatta in its pristine purity and luminosity in all sense fields (or better yet, all senses are a seamless exertion of one formation) until it stabilizes (or rather the traces of self/Self gets released through practice).

Having quality each time actualizing the equipoise of anatta everyday (means like just sitting, zazen, or just doing/acting/walking/etc, without relying on concepts and thoughts), just naked awareness empty of self/Self, fully open, centerless and boundless as vivid manifestation and total exertion.

However post-equipoise, you should contemplate and integrate the right view of emptiness. That requires thoughts initially.

That is to say, for further progression you will also need to understand and realize the view of emptiness, and reading these two articles by Kyle Dixon may help for a start as he was able to have certain realization into the view aspect along with his anatta insight from the beginning - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../a-sun-that... and https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../advise-from...

The second article mentions about the h2o analogy with a link to a ted talk.

These articles will help you and prevent the desync of view and experience that John Tan warned earlier.

As John Tan said about 2 months back, "For Kyle, due to his view in emptiness, the experiential insight of anatta not only pierce through the self/Self but also triggered the arising insight of emptiness. However this may not be true (imo) in most cases if one's view isn't firmly established. For me when I first encountered the chariot analogy, there is an immediate and intuitive recognition that it is referring to anatta but I am unable to grasp the essence of the phrase "emptiness and non-arisen" there and then.

In other words, in addition to self immolation, a specific insight must arise, it is the prajna that clearly sees through the referent is empty and non-arisen. So anatta I would say is about severing the self/Self whereas phase 6 is the blossoming of this specific insight. Extending this insight from self to phenomena, from conventions to magical appearances is then a natural progression."

....

5/21/2012 12:37 PM: John: Not exactly...that is experience...what is important is to realize what the YouTube about h2o then the willingness to drop the inherent view becomes natural. Coupled with the direct experience of anatta and luminosity, experience will turn illusionary naturally but in a different light.
5/21/2012 12:38 PM: John: How is contemplating on illusion like phenomena lead one to such realization and not substantial non dualism

5/21/2012 12:41 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic. Yes I think advaita also talk about illusory but returns to substantial
5/21/2012 12:44 PM: John: Over intellectualizing is no good without a good balance of direct experience. Right view then non conceptual direct experience of what the view is pointing. But get the view right.

...

6/1/2012 8:23 AM: John: Do stage 5 understands what that is being said in the YouTube of the water and h2o?
6/1/2012 8:24 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Hmm... Interesting, never pondered about it. I think the h2o is also about dependent origination
6/1/2012 8:27 AM: John: about the essence of emptiness and DO. Phase 5 do not have this insight. That is what you fail to clearly understand and tell me. Be clear and understand the difference before going further.
6/1/2012 8:28 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
6/1/2012 8:29 AM: John: When you were in ruthlesstruth, same problem arise.
6/1/2012 8:30 AM: John: Having the view of what is described in the YouTube of h2o is not just "there is thoughts, no thinker"
6/1/2012 8:31 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. So its more like seeing the aggregates as manifesting dependently? Btw what do you think about the blog I sent u
6/1/2012 8:37 AM: John: The blog is good but have the same issue. Unless there is clarity of all these insights, there will be no break-through in terms of stability and effortlessness of experience.
6/1/2012 8:38 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. But he understands d.o. too?
6/1/2012 8:40 AM: John: It is like going through the insight of anatta, you understand why a practitioner struggles through getting himself non-dual and effortlessness in no-mind. A non-dual substantialist will tell you how effortless non-dual is and how stable he is in that state but only a practitioner knows the limitation.

...

6/9/2012 9:30 PM: John: I have told you about the disease of non conceptuality, you need to seek a balance. Otherwise it will limit your progress into phase 6 and especially 7. View must be fully integrated into your practice for you to understand what the maha experience is
6/9/2012 9:33 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. Maha is like everything is seamlessly interconnected as this very arising right, its not like one thing interacting with other (which would have segmented experience subtly), but that everything is integrated in one interconnected suchness
6/9/2012 9:40 PM: John: Many do not understand the implication of right view yet. You do not go non conceptual and realize the maha experience of suchness. It is just like how dualistic and inherent view has integrated into our moment to moment of experience. And we feel and behave as if the world is really dual. If a practitioner is simply at "in hearing, only sound and no hearer", he can still get stuck at no self and simply be awed by the grandeur of the pce. This is different from understanding the emptiness of self. Understanding "emptiness" requires you to understand the analogy given by the h2o YouTube and more. It also requires to penetrate into dependent origination by deeper investigation of the nature of experience.

Where does sound go? Is there a "going, coming", is there a "here and there" of sound, is there a voidness where sound return to? Then what does it mean by "no going anywhere" and seeing DO. Then we begin to understand the view of activities and actions and when we see everywhere the seamless integration and total exertions, then maha experience will become more and more obvious and effortless. At this phase there is no self, no dual... All these are already implied...

There are the content of emptiness

You should look at few aspects

1. Seeing inherent object as a mere convention collating ... If a practitioner keeps penetrating whatever arises this way, experience will turn groundless and illusion -like

2. Seeing clearly in non dual mode but deep in us realize that this is merely a dependent originated manifestation, nothing ultimate and solidly real

3. You see "no going, no coming, no here, no there" and penetrate deeply into the seamless interpenetration of activities leading to the maha experience

Until this empty nature of whatever arises is intuited in our moment to moment of experience, you can then feel the total exertion and self liberating aspect of experience"

Practice Guide and Commentary

"When there is simply a pure sense of existence;

When awareness appears mirror like;

When sensations become pristine clear and bright;

This is Luminosity.

When all arising appear disconnected;

When appearance springs without a center;

When phenomena appears to be on their own without controller;

This is No Doer-ship.

When subject/object division is seen as illusion;
When there is clarity that no one is behind thoughts;
When there is only scenery, sounds, thoughts and so forth;
This is Anatta.

When phenomena appears pristinely crystal;
When there is merely one seamless experience;
When all is seen as presence;
This is Non-dual Presence.

When we feel fully the unfindability and unlocatability of phenomena;
When all experiences are seen as ungraspable;
When all mind boundaries of in/out, there/here, now/then dissolve;
This is Emptiness.

When interconnectedness of everything is wholly felt;
When arising appears great, effortless and wonderful;
When presence feels universe;
This is Maha.

When arising is not caged in who, where and when;
When all phenomena appear spontaneous and effortless;
When everything appears right every where, every when;
This is Spontaneous Perfection.

Seeing these as the ground of all experiences;
Always and already so;
This is Wisdom.

Experiencing the ground in whatever arises;
This is Practice.

Happy journey." - John Tan, 2009

The practice guide and commentary written and compiled by The Awakening to Reality team begins here.

A daily meditation practice is important regardless of where you are in practice. I highly recommend watching this and practicing it diligently: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/12/rinzai-zen-at-korinji-why-do-we-sit-in.html

Warning: it is my experience that after every breakthrough, there is a risk of encountering energy imbalances which may be problematic and painful. I have heard of people encountering these problems after Stage 1, Stage 4, Stage 5, it also occurs before any stages happen, and it can happen at any phase or stage. But usually occurs soon after a breakthrough. You can dramatically reduce the risk of facing such problems if you read the chapter on Energy Imbalances and know how to navigate and practice correctly to avoid and mitigate such issues. Even if you face such problems, the duration and intensity of these problems will be dramatically reduced and will usually subside in a week (it can last much longer without the correct pointers). You should not need to worry about these, because as Angelo Dillulo (author of 'Awake: It's Your Turn') said, *"I think many people simply don't talk about it bc they don't want to dissuade others from the path. I generally lean that way bc by the time you've had awakening there is a deep knowing that although all this is going on it's ok and will ultimately work itself out. But from the point of view of someone with a lot of psychological suffering they might think "why in the world would I add all that pain to my experience, no thanks." But that's a skewed view before awakening.", "during retreats I really try to emphasize the integrative as well as the disintegrative and offer a balanced approach in the talks, guided meditations etc (energetically speaking). The feedback I get suggests it helps. The energy imbalances I see in retreatants is minimal compared to what I went through in Zen sesshin, and they still wake up, even non-dual isn't uncommon and honestly I think it's even faster for the balancing effect. "Middle way" seems to have a lot of merit. " 😉"*

STAGE 1: I AM / Eternal Witness

"Practice is not about explanations and mental thoughts, first the eye that is awareness itself must be open." – John Tan

The realization:

A direct touch and realization of the Heart of one's Existence, a pure Certainty of Being, pure doubtless Existence, doubtless certainty and realization of one's existence being a formless yet undeniably obvious Presence-Awareness rather than mind and body. Oceanic Ground of Being out of which all phenomena emerge from and subside back to. This is also the First Stage of the Five Ranks of Tozan Ryokai (a Zen Buddhism map of awakening), called "The Apparent within the Real".

“It was about 20 years back and it all started with the question of “Before birth, who am I?” I do not know why but this question seemed to capture my entire being. I could spend days and nights just sitting focusing, pondering over this question; till one day, everything seemed to come to a complete standstill, not even a single thread of thought arose. There was merely nothing and completely void, only this pure sense of existence. This mere sense of I, this Presence, what was it? It was not the body, not thought as there was no thought, nothing at all, just Existence itself. There was no need for anyone to authenticate this understanding.” - John, 2006, ‘Thusness Stage 1’ description in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html

“Hi Mr. H,

In addition to what you wrote, I hope to convey another dimension of Presence to you. That is Encountering Presence in its first impression, unadulterated and full blown in stillness.

So after reading it, just feel it with your entire body-mind and forgot about it. Don't let it corrupt your mind. 😝

Presence, Awareness, Beingness, Isness are all synonyms. There can be all sorts of definitions but all these are not the path to it. The path to it must be non-conceptual and direct. This is the only way.

When contemplating the koan "before birth who am I", the thinking mind attempts to seek into its memory bank for similar experiences to get an answer. This is how the thinking mind works - compare, categorize and measure in order to understand.

However, when we encounter such a koan, the mind reaches its limit when it tries to penetrate its own depth with no answer. There will come a time when the mind exhausts itself and come to a complete standstill and from that stillness comes an earthshaking BAM!

I. Just I.

Before birth this I, a thousand years ago this I, a thousand later this I. I AM I.

It is without any arbitrary thoughts, any comparisons. It fully authenticates its own clarity, its own existence, ITSELF in clean, pure, direct non-conceptuality. No why, no because.

Just ITSELF in stillness nothing else.

Intuit the vipassana and the samantha. Intuit the total exertion and realization. The essence of message must be raw and uncontaminated by words.

Hope that helps!” - John Tan, 2019

Ken Wilber on I AMness: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA8tDzK_kPI

“If you would free yourself of the sufferings of samsara, you must learn the direct way to become a Buddha. This way is no other than the realization of your own Mind. Now what is this Mind? It is the true nature of all sentient beings, that which existed before our parents were born and hence before our own birth, and which presently exists, unchangeable and eternal. So it is called one’s Face before one’s parents were born. This Mind is intrinsically pure. When we are born it is not newly created, and when we die it does not perish. It has no distinction of male or female, nor has it any coloration of good or bad. It cannot be compared with anything, so it is called Buddha-nature. Yet countless thoughts issue from this Self-nature as waves arise in the ocean or as images are reflected in a mirror.

To realize your own Mind you must first of all look into the source from which thoughts flow. Sleeping and working, standing and sitting, profoundly ask yourself, “What is my own Mind?” with an intense yearning to resolve this question. This is called “training” or “practice[...]”

Excerpt From

The Three Pillars of Zen

Roshi P. Kapleau”

“Zen 悟 *(Realization)* satori is about that ... Starting from directly authenticating clarity from using the first level koan. Like before birth who am I. The mind is put into a paradox ceasing all conceptualization directly authenticating clarity. This authentication is satori and non-conceptual because the mind itself is clear of what is inference and conceptual. So when it tastes it, it recognizes what they called the original face.” – John Tan, 2020

"The ultimate truth of who you are is not I am this or I am that, but I am." - Eckhart Tolle

"Being must be felt. It can't be thought." - Eckhart Tolle

"The mind and intellect do not remain apart from you.
The Bible says, “Be still and know that I am God”.
Stillness is the sole requisite for the realisation of the Self as God.

(Talk 338)
Your duty is to be: and not to be this or that.
“I AM that I AM” sums up the whole truth.

The method is summed up in “BE STILL”.

What does “stillness” mean?
It means “destroy yourself ”. Because any form or shape is the cause of trouble.

Give up that notion that “I am so and so.”

(Talk 363)" - Sri Ramana Maharshi

“Truth is an absolutely silent State of Being. So silent that you almost Disappear. So silent that You become simply An Awareness.” - Osho

“I AM THAT I AM

3.13 Then Moses said to God: 'If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you," and they ask, "What is his name?" what shall I say to them?
3.14 God said to Moses, 'I am that I am'. And he said, 'Say this to the people of Israel, "I am has sent me to you".
3.15 '... this is My name forever and ever and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.'

This biblical quote comes from an Old Testament story that tells of an encounter between God and Moses. God, manifesting Himself as a voice, introduces Himself by saying, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' (Exodus 3:6). God appointed Moses to represent the Israelites, who were then living as slaves in Egypt, in the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh. He wanted Moses to plead their case with the Pharaoh, the ruler of Egypt, and to lead them out of captivity.

The essence of mind is only awareness or consciousness. When the ego, however, dominates it, it functions as the reasoning, thinking or sensing faculty. The cosmic mind, being not limited by the ego, has nothing separate from itself and is therefore only aware. That is what the Bible means by 'I am that I am'. (Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, talk no. 188)

'I am' is the name of God. Of all the definitions of God, none is so well put as the biblical statement 'I am that I am' in Exodus chapter three. There are other statements such as brahmavaiham [Brahman am I], aham brahmasmi [I am Brahman] and soham [I am He]. But none is so direct as Jehovah [which means] 'I am'. (Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, talk no. 106)

It [I am] is the substratum running through all the three states. Wakefulness passes off, I am; the dream state passes off, I am; the sleep state passes off, I am. They repeat themselves and yet I am. (Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, talk no. 244)

The egoless 'I am' is not a thought. It is realization. The meaning or significance of 'I' is God. (Talks with Sri Ramana Maharshi, talk no. 226)

'I exist' is the only permanent self-evident experience of everyone. Nothing else is so self-evident [pratyaksha] as 'I am'. What people call self-evident, viz., the experience they get through the senses, is far from self-evident. The Self alone is

that. Pratyaksha is another name for Self. So to do self-analysis and be 'I am' is the only thing to do. 'I am' is reality. 'I am this or that' is unreal. 'I am' is truth, another name for Self. (Day by Day with Bhagavan, 22nd March, 1946)

Since along with 'I', the aforementioned first name [mentioned in the previous verse], 'am' always shines as the light of reality, 'I am' is also the name. Among the many thousands of names of God, no name suits God, who abides in the Heart, devoid of thought, so aptly as 'I' or 'I am'. Of all the known names of God, 'I', 'I' alone will resound triumphantly when the ego is destroyed, rising as the silent supreme word [mauna para vak] in the Heart-space of those whose attention is Selfward-facing. (Guru Vachaka Kovai, vv. 713-5)

- Ramana Hridayam https://www.facebook.com/RamanaHridayam/ "

"[5:24 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: What is the most important experience in I AM? What must happen in I AM? There is not even an AM, just I... complete stillness, just I correct?

[5:26 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Realization, certainty of being.. yes just stillness and doubtless sense of I/Existence

[5:26 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: And what is the complete stillness just I?

[5:26 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Just I, just presence itself

[5:28 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: This stillness absorbs excludes and includes everything into just I. What is that experience called? That experience is non-dual. And in that experience actually, there is no external nor internal, there is also no observer or observed. Just complete stillness as I.

[5:31 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. yeah even I AM is nondual

[5:31 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: That is your first phase of a non dual experience. We say this is the pure thought experience in stillness. Thought realm. But at that moment we don't know that...we treated that as ultimate reality.

[5:33 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah... I find it weird at that time when you said it is non conceptual thought. Lol

[5:34 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: Yeah

[5:34 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: Lol" – Excerpt from Differentiating I AM, One Mind, No Mind and Anatta

"How still, how silent, how oceanic and immense is that moment of authentication of I AM is crucial." - John Tan, 2020

"It has to be completely still as I-I, no room for movement, no gap. There are certain practices to slow down thoughts and then eventually still the mind completely [that] is necessary.

Koan is designed to trigger that authentication. Likewise for neti neti of self inquiry." – John Tan, 2020

"Like a river flowing into the ocean, the self dissolves into nothingness. When a practitioner becomes thoroughly clear about the illusory nature of individuality, subject-object division does not take place. A person experiencing "AMness" will find "AMness in everything". What is it like?

Being freed from individuality -- coming and going, life and death, all phenomenon merely pop in and out from the background of the AMness. The AMness is not experienced as an 'entity' residing anywhere, neither within nor without; rather it is experienced as the ground reality for all phenomenon to take place. Even in the moment of subsiding (death), the yogi is thoroughly authenticated with that reality; experiencing the 'Real' as clear as it can be. We cannot lose that AMness; rather all things can only dissolve and re-emerges from it. The AMness has not moved, there is no coming and going. This "AMness" is God.

Practitioners should never mistake this as the true Buddha Mind! "I AMness" is the pristine awareness. That is why it is so overwhelming. Just that there is no 'insight' into its emptiness nature." (Excerpt from Buddha Nature is NOT "I Am") - John Tan, 2006

In the Chinese version of the above description of I AMness, John Tan wrote in 2007,

"真如：当一个修行者深刻地体验到"我/我相"的虚幻时，虚幻的"我相"就有如溪河溶入大海，消失于无形。此时也即是大我的生起。此大我清澈灵明，有如一面虚空的镜子觉照万物。一切的来去，生死，起落，一切万事万物，缘生缘灭，皆从大我的本体内幻现。本体并不受影响，寂然不动，无来亦无去。此大我即是梵我/神我。

注: 修行人不可错认这便是真正的佛心啊！由于执着于觉体与甚深的业力，修行人会难以入眠，严重时会得失眠症，而无法入眠多年。"

Once a practitioner deeply experiences the illusoriness of "self/self-image", the illusory "self-image" dissolves like a river merges into the great ocean, dissolving without a trace. This moment is also the arising of the Great Self. This Great Self is pure, mystically alive, clear and bright, just like an empty space-mirror reflecting the ten thousand things. The coming and going, birth and death, rise and fall, the ten thousand events and ten thousand phenomena simply arise and cease according to conditions as illusory manifestations appearing from within the ground-substratum of the Great Self. The ground-substratum never gets affected, is still and without movement, without coming and without going. This Great Self is the Atman-Brahman, God-Self.
Commentary: Practitioners should not mistaken this as the True Buddha Mind! Due to the karmic force of grasping at a substance of awareness, a practitioner may have difficulty entering sleep, and in serious cases may experience insomnia, the inability to fall asleep for many years."

"Venerable Master Xuyun expounded, "'Let go of all worldly attachments and not a single thought will arise.' These two phrases are truly the prerequisites for Chan (Zen) meditation. If these two phrases are not realized, not only will there be no success in Chan meditation, but even entering the practice is impossible. This is because, entangled by myriad conditions and arising and ceasing thoughts, how can you talk about practicing Chan?

'Let go of all worldly attachments and not a single thought will arise' is the prerequisite for Chan meditation. Since we know this, how can we achieve it? For those of the highest capability, one thought eternally ceases, reaching the state of the Unborn, and they instantly realize Bodhi (enlightenment), without any entanglement or verbosity. Next, one eliminates phenomena through understanding the principle. Knowing that the self-nature is originally pure, afflictions and Bodhi, birth and death, and Nirvana are all merely names and have no relation to the self-nature. All things and phenomena are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, and shadows. This body of the four elements, along with mountains and rivers and the great earth, within the self-nature, are like bubbles in the sea, arising and ceasing as they please, without obstructing the fundamental ground-substratum.

One should not follow the arising, abiding, changing, and ceasing of illusory phenomena to generate feelings of liking or disliking, attachment or aversion. Completely let go, like a dead person, naturally the senses and consciousness will diminish, and greed, anger, ignorance, and attachment will be extinguished. The pains and pleasures, hunger and cold, fullness and warmth, honor and disgrace, life and death, misfortune and fortune, praise and blame, gain and loss, safety and danger, level and steep—all should be set aside. Only by doing so can one be considered to have let go. Once you let go, everything is let go, eternally let go, which is called 'letting go of all worldly attachments.'

When all worldly attachments are let go, delusional thoughts naturally disappear, discrimination does not arise, and attachment is far removed. At this point, not a single thought arises, and the inherent brightness of the self-nature fully reveals itself. At this stage, the conditions for Chan meditation are met. With true effort in genuine investigation, only then can one realize the mind and see the true nature."

(Source: "Convenient Teachings of Chan Practice Prerequisites" by Venerable Master Xuyun)

(The above is ChatGPT's translation of the Chinese excerpt: 虚云老和尚开示道：**"'万缘放下，一念不生'这两句话，实在是参禅的先决条件。这两句话如果不做到，参禅不但是说没有成功，就是入门都不可能。盖**（连词，表示原因）**万缘缠绕，念念生灭，你还谈得上参禅吗？'万缘放下，一念不生'，是参禅的先决条件，我们既然知道了，那末，如何才能做到呢？上焉者，一念永歇，直至无生，顿证菩提，毫无络索**（啰嗦）**。其次，则以理除事。了知自性，本来清净，烦恼菩提，生死涅槃，皆是假名，原不与我自性相干。事事物物，皆是梦幻泡影。我此四大色身，与山河大地，在自性中，如海中的浮沤一样，随起随灭，无碍本体。不应随一切幻事的生住异灭而起欣厌取舍。通身放下，如死人一样，自然根尘识心消落，贪嗔痴爱泯灭。所有这身子的痛痒苦乐、饥寒饱暖、荣辱生死、祸福吉凶、毁誉得丧、安危险夷，一概置之度外，这样才算放下。一放下，一切放下，永永放下，叫作万缘放下。万缘放下了，妄想自消，分别不起，执著远离，至此一念不生，自性光明，全体显露。至是参禅的条件具备了，再用功真参实究，明心见性才有分。"**（《虚云和尚方便开示·参禅的先决条件》）)"

Session Start: Friday, March 21, 2008

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyyjU8fzEYU - My stroke of insight | Jill Bolte Taylor

(5:55 PM) AEN: bar. I thought "that's very peculiar" and I looked down at my body and I thought, "whoa, I'm a weird-looking thing." And it was as though my consciousness had shifted away from my normal perception of reality, where I'm the person on the machine having the experience, to some esoteric space where I'm witnessing myself having this experience.

And it was all every peculiar and my headache was just getting worse, so I get off the machine, and I'm walking across my living room floor, and I realize that everything inside of my body has slowed way down. And every step is very rigid and very deliberate. There's no fluidity to my pace, and there's this constriction in my area of perceptions so I'm just focused on internal systems. And I'm standing in my bathroom getting ready to step into the shower and I could actually hear the dialog inside of my body. I heard a little voice saying, "OK, you muscles, you gotta contract, you muscles you relax."

(5:55 PM) AEN:

And I lost my balance and I'm propped up against the wall. And I look down at my arm and I realize that I can no longer define the boundaries of my body. I can't define where I begin and where I end. Because the atoms and the molecules of my arm blended with the atoms and molecules of the wall. And all I could detect was this energy. Energy. And I'm asking myself, "What is wrong with me, what is going on?" And in that moment, my brain chatter, my left hemisphere brain chatter went totally silent. Just like someone took a remote control and pushed the mute button and -- total silence.

And at first I was shocked to find myself inside of a silent mind. But then I was immediately captivated by the magnificence of energy around me. And because I could no longer identify the boundaries of my body, I felt enormous and expansive. I felt at one with all the energy that was, and it was beautiful there.

(5:56 PM) AEN:

When I awoke later that afternoon I was shocked to discover that I was still alive. When I felt my spirit surrender, I said goodbye to my life, and my mind is now suspended between two very opposite planes of reality. Stimulation coming in through my sensory systems felt like pure pain. Light burned my brain like wildfire and sounds were so loud and chaotic that I could not pick a voice out from the background noise and I just wanted to escape. Because I could not identify the position of my body in space, I felt enormous and expensive, like a genie just liberated from her bottle. And my spirit soared free like a great whale gliding through the sea of silent euphoria. Harmonic. I remember thinking there's no way I would ever be able to squeeze the enormousness of myself back inside this tiny little body.

But I realized "But I'm still alive! I'm still alive and I have found Nirvana. And if I have found Nirvana and I'm still alive, then everyone who is alive can find Nirvana." I picture a world filled with beautiful, peaceful, compassionate, loving people who knew that they could com

(5:57 PM) AEN:

So who are we? We are the life force power of the universe, with manual dexterity and two cognitive minds. And we have the power to choose, moment by moment, who and how we want to be in the world. Right here right now, I can step into the consciousness of my right hemisphere where we are -- I am -- the life force power of the universe, and the life force power of the 50 trillion beautiful molecular geniuses that make up my form. At one with all that is. Or I can choose to step into the consciousness of my left hemisphere. where I become a single individual, a solid, separate from the flow, separate from you. I am Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor, intellectual, neuroanatomist. These are the "we" inside of me.

(5:57 PM) AEN: is this like stage 2?

(5:57 PM) AEN: http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/310956?page=2

(5:57 PM) AEN:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyyjU8fzEYU

(6:06 PM) AEN: gd video

Session Start: Friday, March 21, 2008

(6:18 PM) AEN: oic then wat is it

(6:20 PM) Thusness: Stage 1.

(6:20 PM) AEN: oic but she said

(6:21 PM) AEN: And I look down at my arm and I realize that I can no longer define the boundaries of my body. I can't define where I begin and where I end. Because the atoms and the molecules of my arm blended with the atoms and molecules of the wall.

(6:21 PM) AEN: And all I could detect was this energy. Energy. A

(6:21 PM) AEN: ...But then I was immediately captivated by the magnificence of energy around me. And because I could no longer identify the boundaries of my body, I felt enormous and expansive. I felt at one with all the energy that was, and it was beautiful there.

(6:22 PM) Thusness: yes

(6:22 PM) Thusness: that is just stage 1. That is oceanic

(6:22 PM) AEN: oic but she said fusing with the wall?

(6:22 PM) Thusness: not any that uses the word 'fusing' is stage two lah

(6:22 PM) Thusness: ai yoo...

(6:22 PM) AEN: lol she din say fuse she say Because the atoms and the molecules of my arm blended with the atoms and molecules of the wall. so its more like stage 1?

(6:24 PM) Thusness: That is just for your knowledge. what you experienced is just a glimpse...for stage 1. but you have not experienced the 'oceanic' effect yet

(6:24 PM) AEN: icic..

(6:25 PM) Thusness: She is good. :)

(6:25 PM) AEN: you read her transcript or the youtube?

(6:25 PM) Thusness: youtube.

(6:26 PM) Thusness: from the transcript, it doesn't sound that good.

(6:26 PM) Thusness: she is still in stroke.

(6:27 PM) AEN: wat you mean

(6:28 PM) AEN: btw wat bks you bought

(6:29 PM) Thusness: Peaceful Death, Joyful, Rebirth by Tulku Thondup

(6:29 PM) Thusness: and As It Is by Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche

(6:29 PM) AEN: icic..

(6:31 PM) Thusness: She has experienced the "I AM". but that does not mean she is any less enlightened than a person at stage 4. it is just the insight. several important aspects of awareness aren't there yet. the insight is important but the 2 factors about advaita vedanta practitioners are also very important. without it, there is hardly intense and sustainable meditative experience.

(6:34 PM) AEN: oic.. so you mean she don't have the 2 factors?

(6:36 PM) Thusness: she has the two factors. what she need is to know the 'forms' of awareness. non-dual, anatta, and finally, emptiness and self liberation. in the non-dual context, there is still the deep sense of unchangingness, independence and permanence. in the experience of anatta, there is no self. The vividness of 'forms' is known as it without background. the insight becomes completely clear in stage 5. It is an 'already is' natural state of pristine awareness. Always so."

"AEN posted a great site [a video by Francis Lucille] about what I am trying to convey. Do go through the videos. I will divide what that are being discussed in the videos into the method, the view and the experience for ease of illustration as follows:

1. The method is what that is commonly known as self enquiry.
2. The view currently we have is dualistic. We see things in terms of subject/object division.
3. The experience can be further divided into the followings:

    3.1 A strong individual sense of identity

3.2 An oceanic experience free from conceptualization.
This is due to the practitioner freeing himself from conceptuality, from labels and symbols. The mind continuous disassociates itself from all labeling and symbols.

    3.3 An oceanic experience dissolving into everything.
The period of non-conceptuality is prolonged. Long enough to dissolve the mind/body 'symbolic' bond and therefore inner and outer division is temporarily suspended.

The experience for 3.2 and 3.3 are transcendental and are precious. However these experiences are commonly misinterpreted and distorted by objectifying these experiences into an entity that is "ultimate, changeless and independent". The objectified experience is known as Atman, God or Buddha Nature by the speaker in the videos. It is known as the experience of "I AM" with differing degree of intensity of non-conceptuality. Usually practitioners that have experienced 3.2 and 3.3 find it difficult to accept the doctrine of Anatta and Emptiness. The experiences are too clear, real and blissful to discard. They are overwhelmed.

Before we go further, why do you think these experiences are distorted?

(hint: The view currently we have is dualistic. We see things in terms of subject/object division.)" – John Tan, 2008

"And as indicated in the conversation I posted yesterday, after I AM everything else does seem unreal like a dream, a movie projection on the cinema screen of Self or Pure Consciousness which is the sole doubtless reality, the more Real than Real. You feel like an infinite ground of being out of which the apparently moving sceneries and characters float by/emerge from within an unmoving, formless and attributeless ground of Pure Being and Pure Consciousness or the Source. When you jog, you don't feel like a person going pass the trees and people and scenery around you, you feel like being an unmoving Beingness (like a cinema screen) in which passing images of people, trees and sceneries and even your bodily movements float by/emerge from/within/then subside back into that unmoving ground of Being/Presence. Thats how I experience or describe the world at my I AM phase, when exercising and moving about in the world.

Actually this is a good video -- it talks about the world as being like a dream (even using the analogy of the matrix and virtual reality), then the certainty of Being as a realization to the point of complete certainty, then non-dual (one mind). It is not Buddhism but about Advaitic realization.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fa4WtuR0wbY" – Soh, 2020

"I was doing self inquiry yesterday with my back straight and legs crossed in the position of sitting meditation, contemplating 'Who am I', 'Before Birth Who am I'... with an intense desire to know the truth of my being. As the thoughts subside, an intense and palpable sense of beingness and presence, the only 'thing' that remains that I feel to be my innermost essence... became very obvious... very very vivid and intense, and feels like a constant background in which everything is taking place, thoughts (almost none at that moment, but arise afterwards) that arise are also taking place in this unchanging background... and there is this certainty and doubtlessness about this I AM-ness, IT is absolutely real and undeniable. IT/I AMness/The Witness is the only solid and undoubtable Presence and is clearly present with or without thoughts." - Soh's E-Book & Journal, February 2010 entry

"That which is sure of its existence – the innermost certainty of I Am – is what you essentially are. In other words: I Am this knowing that knows that I Am." - Leo Hartong

"The notion that there is an Observer on one hand, and an object of observation on the other hand, is purely the product of conceptual thinking/dualizing.

In actual experience, once you touch that 'certainty of being' that I mentioned, there is no observer and observed distinction. There is just a non-dual sense of Existence, Being, Presence, Knowing, without a sense of 'me' being separated from 'that'. You Are That Knowing which is certain that You Are! The distinction between knower, knowing, and known dissolve into That. You Are That!" – Soh, May 2010 during I AM phase

The 9th century Chinese Ch'an/Zen master, Lin Chi (Japanese: Rinzai): "An ancient doctor says that the body is dependent on its meaning, and the ground is describable by its substance. Being so, we know that Dharma-body and Dharma-ground are reflections of the (original) light. O Venerable Sirs, let us take hold of this person who handles these reflections. For he is the source of all the Buddhas and the house of truth-seekers everywhere. The body made up of the four elements does not understand how to discourse or how to listen to a discourse. Nor do the liver, the stomach, the kidneys, the bowels. Nor does the vacuity of space. That which is most unmistakably perceivable right before your eyes, though without form, yet absolutely identifiable—this is what understands the discourse and listens to it." - Embodied Nonduality https://realizationprocess.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/EmbodiedNonduality.essay_.pdf

"**Who are we? Really**

"The Matrix" is one movie that got many a viewer pondering on the nature of reality. I, for one, am a great fan of The Matrix. In many ways, although not exactly true or that diabolical, the movie is symbolic of the nature of reality. Many a times, meditation allows one to catch glimpses beyond the
ordinary. There are some meditation sessions that literally redefined my identity
and altered my perception of the world. I must emphasize that meditation is the major modality that helped me to understand myself better.

The Eternal Watcher- The True Identity

In one 'awakening' meditation, I came to a state of no thoughts. Such experiences are very hard to describe. This is because the explanation process itself, is within the medium of thoughts and concepts. It is impossible to describe a state of no thoughts using thoughts! Anyway, in the void of no thoughts, one naturally assume that everything must be an unconscious blank. However, that was not the case! What came next was quite a revelation to me. In the void of no thought, I perceived myself to be a Presence... Here's how I will describe myself.

"The Presence is all pervasive, yet un-intrusive. He seems to be in all
things and observes with utter passiveness. He exists beyond concepts,
beliefs and do not need any form. Therefore, I understand him as
eternal.
He also seems to be the subtler state of myself. I also got the feeling
that he existed in all my lifetimes or even more. If I were to name him, I
will describe him as The Eternal Watcher."

You can say that I was completely blown away by the experience. The 'discovery' of the Eternal Watcher was a very important event that completely changed the way I understood consciousness. It also made me contemplated very deeply and seriously about the possible existence of the Divine. These spurred me on an ardent search to understand and make sense of it all. I corresponded with whoever I think can help me unlock the mystery. These people included clairvoyants,

other meditators, people on spiritual paths and new-agers.

From these investigations, it was discovered that others have had similar experiences as well. Based on the consistency and plurality of the descriptions by others, something becomes very certain to me. That is, a human being is much more than a body that can talk and think. The Human Personality, which is our character, is only an outer consciousness of the human. With regard to our identity, our personality is merely the tip of the iceberg. Within the human being's psyche lie much subtler and often-obscured levels of consciousness. I believe these inner consciousnesses could be the different depths of the Soul or levels of being-ness even more profound than that. About the Eternal Watcher, he is ever present. You didn't see him doesn't means he is not there. Because the Presence is so close to the mind, it is not easily perceived.

Perceiving the Eternal Watcher was achieved through the relaxed observation of my own breath. The ultra-relaxed observation eventually becomes a purely passive allowance for thoughts to pass through my consciousness. This, in turn, led to a gradual shutting down of the mental processes of my physical brain cumulating into a state of 'no-thoughts'. Beyond the transitional phase of 'no-thoughts', I became the Eternal Watcher. Experiencing the Eternal Watcher is not an exercise that I can easily brush off as inconsequential. It is not possible for me to assume that my perception of existence and life can be the same as before. Doing so will be blatantly self-deceiving. To me, the most profound experiences where not from doing something. They came from doing nothing.

I believed the Eternal Watcher is the individualized God/Source Presence within oneself. I also believe this Presence is Rigpa as described in Tibetan Buddhism. Some people suggest that the Presence is the same as the Oversoul. However, I am not too sure about this. I hope I am not confusing you. In any case, the only way to validate all these is to personally experience the Presence (Eternal Watcher) and these states for oneself.

That 'no-thought experience' was not the only mystical meditative experience. I have also experienced being a vast ocean of bliss. Ironically, the meditations that were attempted with an agenda of wanting to experience something mystical are the ones that are the least successful. Expectation puts a limit on how far one's consciousness can go. For me, it was better to keep an open mind before sitting down to Meditate." - by Sim Pern Chong, written in 2004 or prior. Sim Pern Chong is a Singaporean like Soh and John Tan, and was the first to realize anatta and emptiness after encountering John Tan more than a decade ago. At that time he already realised I AM for many years. See A Compilation of Simpo's Writings

"Hi,

Besides the Jhanas, have you experience pure empty Presence in a state of no thought? That is the true state of a Being. It is beyond the mind, beyond concepts.

This pure Presence is all pervading, yet void at the same time. In my experience, the Jhanas are different. Jhana's are like 'looking outward' in a meditation, pure Presence is 'looking inwards'. I can't describe it very well.

Pure presence can best be felt when a person is at the moment free from desires. Pure presence is like the ray that emits

its properties into the mind. The properties of the pure presence form your personality.

Hi Sangha,

I am in no position to say whether Pure presence is nibbana. I can only write from my own experience and understanding.

This pure presence is called Rigpa in Tibetan Buddhism. I am not a Buddhist in this life, but I was a Tibetan Monk of Nyingma school several lifetimes ago. That is why I still have a lot of interest in Buddhism.

About Rigpa, when we experience it. It is formless and empty and at the same time infinite and all pervading. It is NOT BLISS. Bliss is a samadhi state but it is not the true nature yet, it is still a state in the mind. I have bliss experiences also, in fact i have then now quite often outside of meditation also.

Rigpa is a presence of 'yourself' that is connect to everything in the universe. That is probably why the Buddha say that there is 'no self'. All is connect to all in the Dharmakaya. Rigpa is a part of the Dharmakaya. When in the state, there is no separation into you or me... We are all one thing which cannot be described.

However, I must say that even now, while reading this, we are already the rigpa. We do not realise this is because we THINK we are just the mind/personality. The mind/personality is a REFLECTION from rigpa. It is not the true self. If you understand what I am write, you may get a sudden awakening/realisation. And if the realisation is deep enough, your viewpoint or way of seeing the world will change.

Just my 2 cents..."

- Sim Pern Chong, 2004, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2013/09/early-forum-posts-by-thusness_17.html

"Just my opinion...

For my case, the first time i experienced a definitive I AM presence, there was zero thought. just a borderless, all pervading presence. In fact, there was no thinking or looking out for whether this is I AM or not. There was no conceptual activity. It was interpreted as 'I AM' only after that experience.

To me, I AM experience is actually a glimpse of the way reality is.. but it is quickly re-interpreted. The attribute of 'borderlessness' is experienced. but other 'attributes such as 'no subject-object', 'transparent luminosity, emptiness are not understood yet.

My take, is that when 'I AM' is experienced, you will be doubtless that it is the experience."

- Sim Pern Chong, 2022

“John Tan: [00:33:09] We call it the presence or we call it, um, we call it the presence. (Speaker: is it the I AM?) I AM is actually different. It's also presence. It's also presence. I AM, depending on... You see the definition of I AM also not. So, uh. Not really the same for some people, like Jonavi? He actually wrote to me saying that his I AM is like localized one in the head. So it's very individual. But that is not the I AM that we are talking about. The I AM is actually a very uh, like for example, I think, uh. Long Chen (Sim Pern Chong) actually went through. It's actually all encompassing. It's actually what we call a non-dual experience. It's actually a very, um. There's no thoughts. It's just a pure sense of existence. And it can be a very powerful. It is indeed a very powerful experience. So when, let's say when you are. When you're very young. Especially when you are ...my age. When you first experience I AM, it is very different. It's a very different experience. We never experienced that before. So, um, I don't know whether it can be even considered as an experience. Um, because there is no thoughts. It's just Presence. But this presence is very quickly. It's very quickly. yeah. It's really quickly. Um. Misinterpreted due to our karmic tendency to of understanding something in a dualistic and in a in a very concrete manner. So very when we experience the we have the experience, the interpretation is very different. And that the, the, the wrong way of interpretation actually create a very dualistic experience.” - John Tan, March 2021 AtR Meeting
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1MYAVGmj8JD8IAU8rQ7krwFvtGN1PNmaoDNLOCRcCTAw

“Someone asked me about luminosity. I said it is not simply a state of heightened clarity or mindfulness, but like touching the very heart of your being, your reality, your very essence without a shadow of doubt. It is a radiant, shining core of Presence-Awareness, or Existence itself. It is the More Real than Real. It can be from a question of "Who am I?" followed by a sudden realization. And then with further insights you touch the very life, the very heart, of everything. Everything comes alive. First as the innermost 'You', then later when the centerpoint is dropped (seen through -- there is no 'The Center') every 'point' is equally so, every point is A 'center', in every encounter, form, sound and activity.” - Soh, 2018

“...It is that direct pointing right to the centre of the heart beyond all verbalization, that you have undoubtedly seen, tasted and realized “Awareness”. It is the flair that mystics penetrate beyond forms, situations, conditions, all arbitrary opinions and communicates directly about this realization....

...So what is the realization about?

The realization that “Awareness” is of a different dimension. It is a touch of “Spirit”, a taste of “Divinity”, not of the dimension of earth, water, space, fire and wind (However as I have pointed out, it should not be treated as beyond and needless *[to treat it as a beyond]* once seen through *[i.e. anatta realization]*).

The knowledge of this is gnosis. It is not a mere experience or simply the radiance of “knowingness” nor is this expounded in Madhyamaka.

It is not just an experience, it is not just merely non-dual, it is a taste of what that is more ‘real’ than ‘real’.

How can this die and be subject to change for this is the very source of life itself?

This is the "heart" of Zen in the wholehearted smile of Maha Kashyapa. This is the direct realization of "Buddha" beyond experience and verbalization.

(Soh: the famous Ch'an/Zen slogan

"Direct pointing to the human heart; Seeing the nature and becoming Buddha; Not standing on letters; A separate transmission outside the scriptures.")

Mr. J's message is centered on this and an awakening is the awakening to this dimension, the deepest core of one's beingness and existence. Purged of this, nothing is worth to be termed "enlightenment". This is the whole message that Mr. J is carrying (imo).

How is this related to "Rigpa"? I have no idea as I am not a practitioner in Dzogchen but definitely it is the "heart" of Zen. This is what triggers the journey and ends the journey.

On the other hand, your emphasis is on anatta. An equally important insight and is the key of Buddhist's enlightenment. Divorcing this insight in expense of any other realizations can hardly be termed "Buddhist's awakening" and prajna wisdom is the full maturing of this insight.

I wrote this because for readers that have not awaken to what Mr. J is pointing appear confusing. As for you, you will have to be more skillful in integrating them.

In any case neither of these insights should be overlooked. The realization that Mr. J emphasized is precious but to grasp the breadth and depth of this priceless jewel requires far more than that in one's spiritual journey. It requires the awakening of prajna wisdom to pierce into the deepest depth of duality and inherency. There is nothing that needs to be done yet there is so much "doing" during the "undoing" process due simply to a mistaken view. This simple mistaken view is so powerfully hypnotic that it requires the birth of a Buddha to expound the truth of it, so not to underestimate it.

Homage to Buddha

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Update by AEN:

I asked Thusness: The taste of spirit is not limited only to the formless mind/thought realm but can be found in all senses too isn't it?

Thusness: Yes. Go through it... and contemplate to balance and refine your insights.

Me: Then why do you say it is different from the radiance of the earth etc? I'd see it as the equal taste as I told Piotr. I think Actual Freedom Richard had similar experience yet can't recognise the equal taste in I AM [mind/thought realm], whereas I AM practitioners may not recognise the equal taste in senses.

Thusness: I did not say [that the taste can't be seen in all manifestation] but I said that is Mr. J's heart of realization. Updated to clarify.

Me: I see. What do you mean by needless once seen through. Needless to seek beyond?

Thusness: Yes only when view is dualistic and inherent it appears so. But that quality and dimension of realization must remain.

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11/4/13 4:43:58 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Piotr asked how is this not reification: “How can this die and subject to change for this is the very source of life itself.”
11/4/13 5:01:45 PM: John Tan: That is reification and self view. Eternalist view. It is easy to get overwhelmed and amplified by the realization. Therefore view is important. A person with inherent and dualistic view will find it difficult to overcome that realization unless one arises another insight that is more overwhelming without the taste and flavor of the "absolute". Then gradually refine the view through experience and faith in Dharma.

11/4/13 5:48:38 PM: John Tan: It is not easy to overcome as I told Piotr for Mr. J's case. Imagine if you were to talk to someone like Ramana Maharishi.

11/4/13 5:55:18 PM: John Tan: The overcoming has been tough for me too. It is not a smooth path... At least not as smooth as you... lol

.....

Thusness wrote to Mr. J:

Hi Mr. J, Despite all differences we may have about lower yanas, no practices needed, Absolute... I really appreciate your zealous attempt to bring this message into view and I agree with you wholeheartedly on this aspect of “transmission”. If one truly wants this essence to be “transmitted”, how can it be otherwise? For what is to be passed is truly of a different dimension, how can it be adulterated with words and forms? The ancient teachers are extremely serious in observing and waiting for the right condition to pass the essence unreservedly and wholeheartedly. So much so that when the essence is transmitted, it must boil the blood and penetrate deep into the bone marrow. The entire body-mind must become one opening eye. Once open, everything turns “spirit”, mind intellect drops and what’s left is aliveness and intelligence

everywhere! Mr. J, I sincerely hope you well, just don't leave trace in the Absolute. Gone! :)" - Writings from John Tan in 2013

"Sire Mejia I Am realization is exquisitely clear realization that "I think therefore I Am" is an error. It's not an error in the sense that it is a thought/belief and completely fine to be there, it is in error in the sense that I Am is clearly seen to be primary to and independent of any thought/belief no matter how gross or subtle. Meaning the sense of existence is so self-obvious that it is thoroughly and definitely seen to not be contingent in the least upon any thought/belief/position/view. It is no small thing or sudden conceptual understanding that is known to be "the right one." It is so real that all previous paradigms of real are utterly obliterated. It is so astounding when realized that many take it to be the end of realization (it's actually the beginning). Teachings around pure being, "everything is consciousness" etc are rooted in this realization.

Sorry to interject there 🤣 " - Angelo Gerangelo

"William Lam: It's non conceptual.

John Tan: It's non conceptual. Yup. Okay. Presence is not conceptual experience, it has to be direct. And you just feel pure sense of existence. Means people ask you, before birth, who are you? You just authenticate the I, that is yourself, directly. So when you first authenticate that I, you are damn happy, of course. When young, that time, wah... I authenticate this I... so you thought that you're enlightened, but then the journey continues. So this is the first time you taste something that is different. It is... It is before thoughts, there is no thoughts. Your mind is completely still. You feel still, you feel presence, and you know yourself. Before birth it is Me, after birth, it is also Me, 10,000 years it's still this Me, 10,000 year before, it's still this Me. So you authenticate that, your mind is just that and authenticate your own true being, so you don't doubt that. In later phase...

Kenneth Bok: Presence is this I AM?

John Tan: Presence is the same as I AM. Presence is the same as... of course, other people may disagree, but actually they're referring to the same thing. The same authentication, the same what... even in Zen is still the same.

But in later phase, I conceive that as just the thought realm. Means, in the six, I always call the six entries and six exits, so there is the sound and there's all these... During that time, you always say I'm not sound, I'm not the appearance, I AM the Self that is behind all these appearances, alright? So, sounds, sensations, all these come and go, your thoughts come and go, those are not me, correct? This is the ultimate Me. The Self is the ultimate Me. Correct?

William Lam: So, is that nondual? The I AM stage. It's non-conceptual, was it nondual?

John Tan: It's nonconceptual. Yes, it is nondual. Why is it nondual? At that moment, there is no duality at all, at that moment when you experience the Self, you cannot have duality, because you are authenticated directly as IT, as this pure sense of Being. So, it's completely I, there's nothing else, just I. There's nothing else, just the Self. I think, many of you have experienced this, the I AM. So, you probably will go and visit all the Hinduism, sing song with them, meditate with them, sleep with them, correct? Those are the young days. I meditate with them, hours after hours, meditate, sit with them, eat with them, sing song with them, drum with them. Because this is what they preach, and you find these group of people, all talking about the same language." -

https://docs.google.com/document/d/16QGwYIP_EPwDX4ZUMUQRA30lpFx40ICpVr7u9n0klkY/edit?fbclid=IwAR3X5dkmIlT6_fORDzI50vNgZb5PqIv87AGS8YaUxCZzIHJf0n4ZnMsd3zA

Subphases in no particular order:

- Innermost Core of Existence (aka Soul/Atomic)
- Infinite All-Pervading Self/Presence
- Ocean of Bliss
- I and all beings/things are being lived by the one cosmic life and intelligence, the Source of being and will (aka God-Realization as distinguished from mere Self-Realization)
- I am the I in you, me, and everything

The experience:

One can have glimpses and experiences of I AM without Self-Realization (Self-Realization means reaching the point of complete doubtless certainty of Being/Existence with a Eureka! factor), but Self-Realization will surely come with experiences. Self-Realization is characterized by the direct realization of Self in complete stillness, ultimate, without thoughts, no inference, entire and complete, complete certainty without a trace of doubt, resting completely as Self, as if you have found what your Self is and there is nobody and nothing who can shake your understanding from that point onwards. This is not merely a glimpse or experience that later fades or leaves doubts or uncertainty, in which case you can be said to have had an "I AM experience" but not "I AM realization (Self-Realization)".

Experiences associated with I AM include:

- Spacious mirror-like Presence behind all objects
- Being an unchanging and formless Witnessing Presence
- Of not being the body, but a Spirit
- Energetic experiences/releases ("At that moment of realization, I experienced a tremendous flow of energy being released. It was as if life was expressing itself through my body and I was nothing but this expression" - John Tan, 2006)

"(7:45 PM) Thusness: It is common to get into this pristineness first. You will first only know about the luminosity, the clear, sharp, vivid experience. Then when you progress further, it is the empty space, void yet with a crystal clear sensation that becomes the object of your grasp. you will become intrigued by the 'transparency', like a crystal clear void. :) This is experiencing the 'pure', 'pristine' quality of awareness." - John Tan, 2009

There are also many other meditative states and moods, generally categorized into bliss, non-thought and clarity. You can experience episodes of bliss, episodes of being free from thoughts, episodes of intensified clarity or expansion of consciousness. However all these experiences are like mist, they disappear after a while. They are not the kind of pivotal

breakthrough realization or Eureka that Self-Realization brings, a realization that comes with unshakeable certainty that will never be lost.

Wrote to someone:

“What you call "One Taste of Emptiness, and this "feels" like an all-containing, all-pervading Space." -- actually this is an aspect of what I call I AM, however, it was experienced even before my realization of I AM. In other words, there was a period between 2007 and 2009 where I was having glimpses of I AM here and there, and towards 2009 I had very strong glimpses and experiences of the space-like nature of I AM. However there was still no doubtless realisation yet.

Also I discussed my experience of one's true nature as awareness that is space-like and all-pervading during 2009 with my Mahayana teacher who confirmed it with me and told me I was going in the right direction.

I also wrote in sgForums then, dated 4 January 2009: "Our true nature is like clear space, a presence pervading everything but not limited or confined by anything. It is sky like awareness.

However we are often fixated on the particular thoughts, feelings, and because of this we lose sight of spacious awareness.

Just like most of us look at particular shapes and forms but never notices the space surrounding them.

When one aligns with spacious awareness, there is no fixation on anything, like the sky doesn't bother or get bothered by the clouds passing by. They just pass by without hindrance. But at the same time they are felt intimately in that field of spacious presence."

In reply, John Tan wrote to me about the nondual and anatta (which I only come to realize almost two years later):

"Hi AEN,

Yes not to be fixated but also not to objectify the “spaciousness” otherwise “spaciousness” is no less fixated. The ‘space’ appears appealing only to a mind that abstracts but to a fully participating and involving mind, such “spaciousness” has immediately sets itself apart, distancing itself from inseparable. Emptiness is never a behind background but a fully partaking foreground manifesting as the arising and passing phenomena absence of a center. Therefore understand ‘spaciousness’ not like sky but like passing clouds and flowing water, manifesting whenever condition is. If ‘Emptiness’ has made us more fixated and immobilized this innate freedom of our non-dual luminosity, then it is ‘stubborn emptiness’.

Nevertheless, no matter what said, it is always inadequate. If we want to fully realize the inexpressible, be willing to give up all centers and point of references that manifests in the form of ‘who’, ‘when’ and ‘where’. Just give up the entire

sense of self then instantly all things are spontaneously perfected.

Just a sharing, nothing intense.

Happy New Year! :)"

In the following months, he also clarified to me the difference between my experience of my true nature as space-like awareness as the I AM realization:

also

"1. On Experience and Realization

Comments by Soh: Also see related article - I AM Experience/Glimpse/Recognition vs I AM Realization (Certainty of Being)

One of the direct and immediate response I get after reading the articles by Rob Burbea and Rupert is that they missed one very and most important point when talking about the Eternal Witness Experience -- The Realization. They focus too much on the experience but overlook the realization. Honestly I do not like to make this distinction as I see realization also as a form of experience. However in this particular case, it seems appropriate as it could better illustrate what I am trying to convey. It also relates to the few occasions where you described to me your space-like experiences of Awareness and asked whether they correspond to the phase one insight of Eternal Witness. While your experiences are there, I told you 'not exactly' even though you told me you clearly experienced a pure sense of presence.

So what is lacking? You do not lack the experience, you lack the realization. You may have the blissful sensation or feeling of vast and open spaciousness; you may experience a non-conceptual and objectless state; you may experience the mirror like clarity but all these experiences are not Realization. There is no 'eureka', no 'aha', no moment of immediate and intuitive illumination that you understood something undeniable and unshakable -- a conviction so powerful that no one, not even Buddha can sway you from this realization because the practitioner so clearly sees the truth of it. It is the direct and unshakable insight of 'You'. This is the realization that a practitioner must have in order to realize the Zen satori. You will understand clearly why it is so difficult for those practitioners to forgo this 'I AMness' and accept the doctrine of anatta. Actually there is no forgoing of this 'Witness', it is rather a deepening of insight to include the non-dual, groundlessness and interconnectedness of our luminous nature. Like what Rob said, "keep the experience but refine the views".

Lastly this realization is not an end by itself, it is the beginning. If we are truthful and not over exaggerate and get carried away by this initial glimpse, we will realize that we do not gain liberation from this realization; contrary we suffer more after this realization. However it is a powerful condition that motivates a practitioner to embark on a

spiritual journey in search of true freedom. :)" - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/09/realization-and-experience-and-non-dual.html

Half a year after this post, I realized I AM."

(Soh: the reason John Tan said 'we suffer more after this [I AM] realization' is due to his energy imbalances triggered after I AM. However, the period after I AM realization was blissful and mostly problem-free for me, as I avoided pitfalls or incorrect practice by practicing according to John's pointers and guidance, which I have written in this chapter. See chapter on *Tips on Energy Imbalances* for more details.).

For the I AM phase, it is essential to reach the point of Realization. Having mere experiences and glimpses is insufficient.

Someone asked, "In this video (and his writings) Wheeler is saying that the simple ordinary feeling of being/awareness is what he and the other teachers/traditions/books are talking about. But the description of AtR I AM sounds like an extraordinary realization of certainty of being with some extraordinary experiences. How to reconcile this? https://youtu.be/WdGmvOGwWTs"

I replied, "Good video. It is not different from what John Wheeler talks about or anything that standard Advaita materials talk about.

I said I AM realization comes with doubtless certainty, and is different from an experience or glimpse. You can see that after John Wheeler realized his Self after meeting Sailor Bob Adamson, he speaks with confidence and doubtless certainty grounded in his direct knowledge of Self, and he no longer felt that this 'Awareness' is some state to be maintained or an experience to be grasped or that comes and fades, etc. All these indicate that one has not reached the point of complete doubtless certainty. If and when he talks about 'ordinary awareness', he is talking with doubtless certainty what his ever-present essence of Being or Awareness is, whereas normal people have only a vague idea of what awareness is and lack that sort of doubtless certainty.

John Wheeler said "Am I feeling doubt or metaphysical uncertainty? Is the knowledge of my true nature unshakable? If not, the understanding is not complete." - https://awakeningclaritynow.com/awakening-to-the-natural.../

"Keep it simple. You are present and aware. This is beyond doubt. Feel your way into this doubtless presence that you are. All other considerations take you into conceptual thought and away from what is being pointed to.", "You know that you are. This is beyond doubt. Stop there and be. Start to think of what that means and you step back into thought and doubt." - You Were Never Born, John Wheeler

I also said you feel [that Presence is] God-Like *(Especially when the 'impersonality' aspect comes forth, see the Four Aspects of I AM)*, or more precisely is God itself:

"Saints and sages throughout history have found their true nature to be that one light. You, too, are that light. You are not separate or different from those beings, because the divine is one and shines alike in everyone as their own true self.", "The aim is the dissolution of the separate seeker. This is realized by inquiring if the separate seeker is even present, or else through acknowledgement of the supremacy of the one power. Either way, the separate self is removed from the equation. God or reality alone remains, the one omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient source. That is nothing but pure love itself." - You Were Never Born, John Wheeler

John Wheeler also said, “Once you get a basic sense of this, you discover some very incredible things about this basic aware presence. There is nothing mundane about it at all.” - https://johnwheelernonduality.wordpress.com/2020/07/20/clarifying-ones-essential-identity-an-interview-with-john-wheeler/

Once you have true Self-Realization, your knowledge of Self is doubtless and unshakeable.

So unshakeable that not even the Buddha will be able to shake your understanding.

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../realization...

"moment of immediate and intuitive illumination that you understood something undeniable and unshakable -- a conviction so powerful that no one, not even Buddha can sway you from this realization because the practitioner so clearly sees the truth of it. It is the direct and unshakable insight of ‘You’. This is the realization that a practitioner must have in order to realize the Zen satori. " - John Tan, 2009

Another example of doubtless, unshakeable certainty:

When Fa-chang (752-839 CE) of Mt. Ta-mei ("Great Plum") first visited the master, he inquired about the meaning of the word "Buddha."
"The Mind is Buddha," said Ma-tsu. Upon that Fa-chang was enlightened. Later Fa-chang retired once more to Ta-mei and taught others there. When the master heard of this, he dispatched a monk to inquire what it was that Fa-chang had so learned that allowed him to presume to head a mountain lineage. Fa-chang told the monk that it was the dictum, "The Mind is Buddha." The monk noted, "Recently the master sings a different tune. Now it is 'Neither Mind nor Buddha'."
Fa-chang reacted, "That rascal deludes people to no end! Let him teach you how there is neither mind nor Buddha. For my part, I will stick to 'The Mind is Buddha.'"
When the monk reported this to the master, Ma-tsu remarked, "Indeed, the plum is ripe.""

This certainty does not indicate that one has reached the final realization or insight, but it is an important breakthrough nonetheless.

Dzogchen teacher Sogyal Rinpoche taught, “Sometimes when I meditate, I don't use any particular method. I just allow

my mind to rest, and find, especially when I am inspired, that I can bring my mind home and relax very quickly. I sit quietly and rest in the nature of mind; I don't question or doubt whether I am in the "cor-rect" state or not. There is no effort, only rich understanding, wakefulness, and unshakable certainty. When I am in the nature of mind, the ordinary mind is no longer there. There is no need to sustain or confirm a sense of being: I simply am. A fundamental trust is present. There is nothing in par-ticular to do... ...If meditation is simply to continue the flow of Rigpa after the introduction, how do we know when it is Rigpa and when it is not? I asked Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche this ques-tion, and he replied with his characteristic simplicity: "If you are in an unaltered state, it is Rigpa." If we are not contriving or manipulating the mind in any way, but simply resting in an unaltered state of pure and pristine awareness, then that is Rigpa. If there is any contriving on our part or any kind of manipulating or grasping, it is not. Rigpa is a state in which there is no longer any doubt; there is not really a mind to doubt: You see directly. If you are in this state, a complete, natural certainty and confidence surge up with the Rigpa itself, and that is how you know."

(Note: this is the initial Rigpa of Dzogchen, but not the final, ripened Rigpa. For more information, read The Degrees of Rigpa)

As Adyashanti said, "Emptiness [Soh: not Thusness Stage 6 but I AMness in this context] is not the totality of what you are. Emptiness is a profound aspect of what you are, it's a profound taste of your true nature, it's not the totality of what you are any than getting up in the morning and feeling good is the totality of what you are, or feeling bad is a totality of what you are... ...Whenever you touch upon a deep truth, suchness of reality, your true nature, each aspect feels like it's total and complete and all-inclusive at that moment. So that's why teachers have a very hard time getting through to people when they have an initial experience of anything because if it's an initial experience of reality it feels totally complete and there is a certain innate confidence that arises within you. Not an egoic confidence but a confidence that comes from reality."

“The Doorway of “I Am”

How strange it is to look deeply into one’s true nature. We can all state with certainty, “I am.” That’s the starting point—not “I am this or that,” but simply “I am.” We have all been taught to add onto this sense of “I am” various defining characteristics and evaluations. But these are secondary at best, a collection of conditioned conclusions and evaluations, most of which were inherited from the people and the world around us; put simply, they are nonessential. The “I am” is essential to being self-conscious; it is the quintessential articulation and confession of self-consciousness itself. Everything that gets added unto this primary sense of “I am” obscures one’s essential nature.

Another way to approach the “I am” sense is to simply attend to your immediate sense of being. This is not as simple as it sounds because we are so accustomed to thinking about our experience rather than simply experiencing our experience. This is exactly where good spiritual practice comes in. The essence of any good spiritual practice is to focus on direct experience rather than on what we think about the experience. To focus on the immediate sense of “I am” devoid of all interpretations and evaluations is itself a powerful spiritual practice. The immediate sense of “I am” is like being a simple conscious presence, prior to being a someone or something with a history in time. In fact, with a little practice and willingness to let go of clinging to one’s familiar identity, this simple and immediate sense of “I am” will reveal itself to be the same underlying conscious presence as all other conscious beings.

This then forms the basis of a transformed relationship with all beings, where our essential sameness becomes the ground of our relatedness with others, even as we have a newfound respect and appreciation for our human differences. The universal "I am" wears an infinite variety of masks that we human beings call our personality. But connecting with the universal "I am" in oneself and in other beings allows us to connect from a universal and essential basis, rather than from being exclusively entranced by surface appearances and conditioned reactions.

The "I am" is a doorway into the essential, the universal, and the sacred. To gain entry into that doorway requires us to step into the realm of not knowing—which is simply to say that we must unknow, or temporarily suspend, everything that we think that we know about ourselves. We must enter into a state of innocent unknowing just prior to all egocentric identification. We must not only think about doing this, or imagine doing it—we must actually do it! We must let go and not know who or what we are. Then, and only then, can we directly sense into the "I am," the conscious presence which pervades any and all perceptions and experiences. Then we dwell as that conscious presence. The rest of the unfolding will happen by itself, in its own time. Patient persistence is the key.

Eventually, even the "I am" sense will fall away . . . and self-consciousness will dissolve into its source. But for now, let's not define this source, for there is no substance to the source to grasp hold of. Everywhere the supreme reality is on display, but nowhere can it be grasped. Follow the "I am" to its source, to that dark light that sees but cannot be seen, and knows but cannot be known. When the eye that never sleeps awakens—yes, this is a contradiction to the intellect—the dharma wheel of enlightenment turns everywhere. This, at least, is how it feels and has always felt.

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"PERCEPTIONS ARE NEVER THE TRUTH

When I first came to Bhagavan, I saw a bright light like the sun, with Bhagavan in the midst of it. Later on, I used to see a light between my eyebrows. On another occasion, I saw a big light come out from Bhagavan's head and fill the hall. In that light, everything disappeared, including Bhagavan. Only the feeling of 'I' remained, floating in a luminous void.

When I related these experiences to Bhagavan, he said, 'Yes, such visions do occur. To know how you look you must look into a mirror, but don't take that reflection to be yourself. What is perceived by our senses and the mind is never the truth. All visions are mere mental creations, and if you believe in them, your progress ceases. Inquire to whom the visions occur. Find out who ~is their witness. Stay in pure awareness, free from all thoughts. Don't move out of that state.'"

- Shantammal in The Power of the Presence III

How to Practice to Realize I AM

Practice Self-Enquiry in seated meditation and in daily life (whenever not engaged in activities that require specific or full attention, such as walking, eating, etc). Keep asking "Before birth, Who am I?" or just "Who am I?" (ala Ramana Maharshi - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/search/label/Ramana%20Maharshi, Ch'an Master Hsu Yun -

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/essentials-of-chan-practice-hua-touself.html and read this e-book: https://files.awakeningtoreality.com/Master_Hsu-Yun_Discourses_and_Dharma_Words.pdf). "Be As You Are: The Teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi" is a good book on self-enquiry and self-realization. Also check out Angelo Dilullo (Angelo Gerangelo)'s book: Awake: It's Your Turn (https://www.amazon.com/Awake-Your-Turn-Angelo-Dilullo-ebook/dp/B094X5DLGX) and Adyashanti's True Meditation (https://www.amazon.com/True-Meditation-Discover-Freedom-Awareness-ebook/dp/B003X27LB8/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=adyashanti+true+meditation&qid=1628090327&s=digital-text&sr=1-1). In Buddhism, many Zen masters advocate the practice of self-enquiry as a koan or hua-tou. In Dzogchen teachings, it is a part (although not the entirety) of the guru yoga method, at least according to what was taught by the Dzogchen teacher Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, and guru yoga is considered the primary Dzogchen practice. Lama Surya Das equates Dzogchen's rushan (separating rigpa from sems) practice with self-inquiry – there's a nice book that discusses dzogchen and self-enquiry meditations which you can read, it is Natural Radiance: Awakening to Your Great Perfection - https://www.amazon.com/Natural-Radiance-Awakening-Great-Perfection/dp/1591792835. However I am not implying that the Dzogchen Rushan methods are only restricted to the "I AM" realization, for example, I have learnt that many Dzogchen teachings and methods are aimed at realising anatta, etc. However, according to the Dzogchen teacher Arcaya Malcolm, although unfabricated clarity is not the final realization of Dzogchen, it is the initial recognition of rigpa that serves as the basis for Dzogchen practice. In my experience, self enquiry is a potent method to discover unfabricated clarity. In Hinduism, we also have famous luminaries like Ramana Maharshi who advocate self-enquiry as the primary way to self-realization.

Also check out these pointers by Angelo Gerangelo: Awakening to Reality: Helper Pointers to I AM Awakening, etc by Angelo Gerangelo

While asking Who am I?, do not dwell in conceptual answers but trace the radiance (of thoughts/sounds/sights/etc) back to the formless and luminous source, the Self (See: Chinul - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/search/label/Zen%20Master%20Chinul)

In Self-Enquiry - while asking Who am I?, everything you observe - the objects of five senses (vision, sounds, sensations, smells, tastes) as well as thoughts, feelings, emotions, mind, body, etc, are seen to be not me, not this, not this (neti-neti). What remains when all objects seen are dissociated from as 'not me, not me' is the realization of the Seer, the formless Presence-Awareness, the doubtless pure Being which remains.

"I am aware of my feelings, so I am not my feelings – Who am I? I am aware of my thoughts, so I am not my thoughts – Who am I? Clouds float by in the sky, thoughts float by in the mind, feelings float by in the body – and I am none of those because I can Witness them all."

- Ken Wilber, Some Writings on Self-Enquiry and Non-duality by Ken Wilber - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2007/05/some-writings-on-non-duality-by-ken.html

“1. Who am I ?

The gross body which is composed of the seven humours (dhatus), I am not; the five cognitivesense organs, viz. the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell, which apprehend theirrespective objects, viz. sound, touch, colour, taste, and odour, I am not; the five cognitive sense-organs, viz. the organs of speech, locomotion, grasping, excretion, and procreation, which have astheir respective functions speaking, moving, grasping, excreting, and enjoying, I am not; the fivevital airs, prana, etc., which perform respectively the five functions of in-breathing, etc., I am not;even the mind which thinks, I am not; the nescience too, which is endowed only with the residualimpressions of objects, and in which there are no objects and no functioning’s, I am not.

2. If I am none of these, then who am I?
After negating all of the above-mentioned as ‘not this’, ‘not this’, that Awareness which alone remains - that I am.

3. What is the nature of Awareness?
The nature of Awareness is existence-consciousness-bliss”

- Ramana Maharshi, partial excerpt from Who Am I? (Nan Yar?) - *https://files.awakeningtoreality.com/who_am_I.pdf*

Check out these videos:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTvyLfCd9jI "Who Am I?" - Greg Goode

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZYjI6gh9RxE A Guided Self-Inquiry Exercise - Greg Goode

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BA8tDzK_kPI - Ken Wilber - I Am Big Mind - YouTube

Soh, 2020, “John Tan asked someone two questions:
Without thoughts, tell me what is your very mind right now?
Without using any words or language, how do you experience ‘I’ right now?

Someone replied, “No mind"
That friend of ours told John Tan something similar and got 'smacked'.
"John Tan: Without any thought, tell me what is your very mind now?
Friend: Void. Hollow.
John Tan: Smack your head... lol.
Without using any words or language, how do you experience 'I' right now'?
Friend: ....something about personality, habits, opinions...
John Tan: If there is no thoughts, how can there be habits, opinions and personality? Everywhere you go, how can you miss it? Day in and day out, wherever and whenever there is, there 'you' are! How can 'you' distant yourself from 'yourself'?"

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More by John Tan: "Mahamudra, Dzogchen, Zen, whatever tradition, how are they able to deny you from yourself? So who are You?"

Self-Enquiry is called a direct path for a reason:

“Don’t relate, don’t infer, don’t think. Authenticating ‘You’ yourself requires nothing of that. Not from teachers, books, Mahamudra, Dzogchen, Zen or even Buddha, whatever comes from outside is knowledge. What that come sfrom the innermost depth of your own beingness, is the wisdom of you yourself.

There is no need to look for any answers. Ultimately, it is your own essence and nature. To leap from the inferencing, deducting and relating mind into the most direct and immediate authentication, the mind must cease completely and right back into the place before any formation of artificialities. If this ‘eye’ of immediacy isn’t open, everything is merely knowledge and opening this eye of direct perception is the beginning of the path that is pathless. Ok enough of chats and there have been too much words. Don’t sway and walk on. Happy journey!’

...

Mr. R, I have been very direct to you and it is just a simple question of what is your mind right now and nothing else. There is no other path more straightforward than that.

I have told you to put aside, all thoughts, all teachings, even Dzogchen, Mahamudra, Zen and just [asked] ‘what is your mind right now?’. Isn’t that telling you straight to the point, not wasting time and words? I have also told you whatever comes from external is knowledge, put all those aside. Wisdom comes from within yourself directly. But you have cut and pasted me all the texts, conversations, Zen, Mahamudra, Dzogchen, Madhyamaka that I have told you to put aside.

You asked me what is my advice. Still the same. Don’t go after experiences and knowledge, you have read and known enough, so return back to simplicity. Your duty is not to know more, but to eliminate all these and [get] back to the simplicity of the direct taste. Otherwise you will have to waste a few more years or decades to return back to what that is most simple, basic and direct.

And from this simplicity and directness, you then allow your nature to reveal the breadth and depth through constantly authenticating it in all moments and all states through engagement in different conditions.

So unless you drop everything and [get] back into a clean, pure, basic simplicity, there is no real progress in practice. Until you understand the treasure of simplicity and start back from there, every step forward is a retrogress.“ – John Tan, 2020

For the purposes of contemplation for the first breakthrough awakening (the I AM), this pointer by Angelo Dillulo (author of Awake: It's Your Turn, he also realised deep insights further than the initial awakening and his pointers are clear) is important:

"Inquiry for First Awakening

The inquiry that leads to first awakening is a funny thing. We want to know "how" precisely to do that inquiry, which is completely understandable. The thing is that it's not wholly conveyable by describing a certain technique. Really it's a matter of finding that sweet spot where surrender and intention meet. I will describe an approach here, but it's important to keep in mind that in the end, you don't have the power (as what you take yourself to be) to wake yourself up. Only Life has that power. So as we give ourselves to a certain inquiry or practice it's imperative that we remain open. We have to keep the portals open to mystery, and possibility. We have to recognize that the constant concluding that "no this isn't it, no this isn't it either..." is simply the activity of the mind. Those are thoughts. If we believe a single thought then we will believe the next one and on and on. If however we recognize that, "oh that doubt is simply a thought arising now," then we have the opportunity to recognize that that thought will subside on its own... and yet "I" as the knower of that thought am still here! We can now become fascinated with what is here once that thought (or any thought) subsides. What is in this gap between thoughts? What is this pure sense of I, pure sense of knowing, pure sense of Being? What is this light that can shine on and illuminate a thought (as it does thousands of times per day), and yet still shines when no thought is present. It is self illuminating. What is the nature of the one that notices thoughts, is awake and aware before, during, and after a thought, and is not altered in any way by any thought? Please understand that when you ask these questions you are not looking for a thought answer, the answer is the experience itself.

When we start to allow our attention to relax into this wider perspective we start to unbind ourselves from thought. We begin to recognize the nature of unbound consciousness by feel, by instinct. This is the way in.

At first we may conclude that this gap, this thoughtless consciousness is uninteresting, unimportant. It feels quite neutral, and the busy mind can't do anything with neutral so we might be inclined to purposely engage thoughts again. If we recognize that "not interesting, not important, not valuable" are all thoughts and simply return to this fluid consciousness, it will start to expand. But there is no need to think about expansion or watch for it. It will do this naturally if we stay with it. If you are willing to recognize every thought and image in the mind as such, and keep your attention alert but relaxed into the "stuff" of thought that is continuous with the sense of I, it will all take care of itself. Just be willing to suspend judgement. Be willing to forego conclusions. Be willing to let go of all monitoring of your progress, because these are all thoughts. Be open to the pure experience. Just return again and again to this place of consciousness with no object or pure sense of I Am. If you are willing to do this it will teach itself to you in a way that neither I nor anyone I've ever seen can explain, but it is more real than real.

Happy Travels.

Art by: Platon Yurich”

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https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/09/adyashanti-art-of-self-inquiry.html

Adyashanti:

The Art of Self-Inquiry

When it comes to awakening, I have found two elements to be the most helpful and most powerful. The first is developing a meditative attitude, in which we let go of control on a very deep level and allow everything to be as it is. The second is a serious engagement with our own inherent curiosity and intelligence through meditative self-inquiry. Either one of these two separated can be incomplete: Inquiry separated from meditation can become intellectual and abstract; meditation separated from inquiry can result in our getting lost in various different spiritual states. Combined, they provide the necessary energy, the necessary impetus, to produce a flash of recognition of your true nature. And in the end, that is what spirituality is all about.

WHAT IS A SPIRITUALLY POWERFUL QUESTION?

Meditative self-inquiry is the art of asking a spiritually powerful question. And a question that is spiritually powerful always points us back to ourselves. Because the most important thing that leads to spiritual awakening is to discover who and what we are—to wake up from this dream state, this trance state of identification with ego. And for this awakening to occur, there needs to be some transformative energy that can flash into consciousness. It needs to be an energy that is actually powerful enough to awaken consciousness out of its trance of separateness into the truth of our being. Inquiry is an active engagement with our own experience that can cultivate this flash of spiritual insight.

The most important thing in spiritual inquiry is to ask the right question. The right question is a question that genuinely has energy for you. In spirituality, the most important thing initially is to ask yourself, What is the most important thing? What is spirituality about for you? What is the question that’s in your deepest heart? Not the question that some- one tells you should be there, not what you’ve learned it should be. But what is the question for you? If you meditate, why are you doing it? What question are you trying to answer?

The most intimate question we can ask, and the one that has the most spiritual power, is this: What or who am I? Before I wonder why I am here, maybe I should find out who this “I” is who is asking the question. Before I ask “What is God?” maybe I should ask who I am, this “I” who is seeking God. Who am I, who is actually living this life? Who is right here, right now? Who is on the spiritual path? Who is it that is meditating? Who am I really? It is this question which begins the journey of spiritual self-inquiry, finding out, for your own self, who and what you truly are.

So step number one of self-inquiry is having a spiritually powerful question, such as “Who or what am I?” Step number two is knowing how to ask that question.

THE WAY OF SUBTRACTION

Before we actually find out what we are, we must first find out what we are not. Otherwise our assumptions will continue to contaminate the whole investigation. We could call this the way of subtraction. In the Christian tradition, they call this the Via Negativa, the negative path. In the Hindu tradition of Vedanta, they call this neti neti, which means "not this, not that." These are all paths of subtraction, ways of finding out what we are by finding out what we are not.

We start by looking at the assumptions we have about who we are. For example, we look at our minds and we notice that there are thoughts. Clearly there is something or someone that is noticing the thoughts. You may not know what it is, but you know it's there. Thoughts come and go, but that which is witnessing the thoughts remains.

If thoughts come and go, then they aren't really what you are. Starting to realize that you are not your thoughts is very significant, since most people assume they are what they think. Yet a simple look into your own experience reveals that you are the witness of your thoughts. Whatever thoughts you have about yourself aren't who and what you are. There is something more primary that is watching the thoughts.

In the same way, there are feelings—happiness, sadness, anxiety, joy, peace—and then there is the witness of those feelings. Feelings come and go, but the awareness of feelings remains.

The same is true for beliefs. We have many beliefs, and we have the awareness of those beliefs. They may be spiritual beliefs, beliefs about your neighbor, beliefs about your parents, beliefs about yourself (which are usually the most damaging), beliefs about a whole variety of things. Beliefs are thoughts that we assume to be true. We can all see that our beliefs have changed as we've grown, as we move through a lifetime. Beliefs come and go, but they do not tell us who the watcher is. The watcher or the witness stands before the beliefs.

The same thing goes for our ego personality. We tend to think that we are our egos, that we are our personalities. And yet, just as with thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, we can come to see that there is a witness to our ego personality. There's an ego personality called "you," and then there is a watching of the ego personality. The awareness of the ego personality stands before the personality; it is noticing it, without judging, without condemning.

Here we've started to move into something more intimate. Your essential, deepest nature cannot be your personality. Your ego personality is being watched by something more primary; it is being witnessed by awareness.

With that, we arrive at awareness itself. We notice that there is awareness. You are aware of what you think. You are aware of how you feel. So awareness is clearly present. It is not something that needs to be cultivated or manufactured. Awareness simply is. It is that which makes it possible to know, to experience what is happening.

WHO IS AWARE?

No sooner do we get back to awareness itself than we encounter the primary assumption that "I am the one who is aware." So we investigate that assumption, and discover time and time again that we cannot find out who it is that is aware. Where is this "I" that is aware? It is at this precise moment—the moment when we realize that we cannot find an entity called "me" who owns or possesses awareness—that it starts to dawn on us that maybe we ourselves are awareness itself.

This self-recognition can't be understood in the mind. It's a leap that the mind can't make. Thought cannot comprehend what is beyond thought. That's why we call this a transcendent recognition. It's actually our identity

waking up from the prison of separation to its true state. This is both simple and extraordinarily profound. It is a flash of revelation.

One of the simplest pointers I can give here is to remember that this process of inquiry and investigation really takes place from the neck down. An example of this is when you ask yourself, "What am I?" The first thing most people realize is that they don't know. So most people will go into their minds to try to figure it out. But the first thing that your mind knows is that you don't know. In spiritual inquiry that's very useful information. "I don't know what I am. I don't know who I am."

Once you recognize that, you can either think about it or you can actually feel it. What's it like when you look inside to find out who you are and you don't find an entity called "you"? What does that open space feel like? Feel it in your body; let it register in the cells of your being. This is real spiritual inquiry. This transforms what might have been just an abstract thought in the mind into something that is very visceral, very kinesthetic, and very spiritually powerful.

Once we recognize ourselves as awareness itself, our identity can begin to rest in its essence. Who we are is no longer found in our body, mind, personality, thoughts, and beliefs. Who we are rests in its source. When we rest in our source, our body and mind and personality and thoughts and feelings come into harmony.

THE GREAT INCLUSION

After the Way of Subtraction comes what I call the Great Inclusion. When we start to let go into awareness or spirit, we start to recognize that that is who and what we are. We start to see that everything in existence is simply a manifestation or expression of spirit, whether it's the chair, or the floor, or your shoes, or the trees outside, the sky, the body that you call "you," the mind, the ego, the personality, everything—all are expressions of spirit.

When our identification is caught in these various forms, the result is suffering. But when, through inquiry and meditation, our identity starts to come back to its home ground of awareness, then everything is included. You discover that your humanness is in no way separate from the divinity within you, which is what you actually are.

Now please don't try to understand this with your mind. This is really not understandable in the mind. This knowing resides at a deeper point, at a deeper place within ourselves. Something else understands; something else knows.

THAT WHICH REMAINS THE SAME

Nobody can force this flash of recognition into being. It happens spontaneously. It happens by itself. But what we can do is cultivate the ground and create the conditions under which this flash of recognition happens. We can open our minds to deeper possibilities and start to investigate for ourselves what we really and truly are.

When this awakening to our true nature happens, it may happen for a moment, or it may happen for a longer period of time, or it may happen permanently. Whichever way it occurs, it is perfectly okay. Who you are is who you are. You cannot lose who you are, no matter what your experience is. Even if you have a certain opening and you realize your true nature, and then later you think you've forgotten it, you haven't lost anything.

Therefore the invitation is always to rest more and more deeply, to not grasp at an insight or an experience, to not try and hold on to it, but to recognize the underlying reality, that which never changes. The great 20th-century Indian sage Ramana Maharshi had a saying, “Let what comes come; let what goes go. Find out what remains.”
...

“There is a Zen koan:
Coming empty-handed, going empty-handed—that is human. When you are born, where do you come from? When you die, where do you go? Life is like a floating cloud which appears. Death is like a floating cloud which disappears. The floating cloud itself originally does not exist. Life and death, coming and going, are also like that. But there is one thing which always remains clear. It is pure and clear, not depending on life and death.
Then what is the one pure and clear thing?” – Soh, 2021

“Self-Inquiry instructions from the book 'Natural Radiance' - Lama Surya Das

« Once your mind is calm, focused, lucid, and clear, abruptly turn the mind on itself—mind the mind and turn it inward, with laserlike self-inquiry questions: “Who is thinking my thoughts? Who is trying to meditate? Who is it; what is it; where is it? Who is experiencing my experience right now?”

There is no need to analyze too much—just abruptly pop the question and observe what happens. Let go and see if you can startle yourself into a new way of seeing and being, short-circuiting your usual outward-looking, dualistic thought process of self and other. See through the seer, directly experience the experiencer, and be free; rest in luminous centerless openness, the natural Great Perfection, pure presence, rigpa.

Again cutting even deeper, abruptly turn the mind upon itself again: Who is experiencing? Who and what is hearing? Who and what is seeing, thinking, and feeling? Who is having these physical sensations? Who is it; what is it; where is it? Is it in the head; is it in the body; is it in the heart; is it in the mind and consciousness? Who is experiencing? Who or what am I? How is it happening? See if you can enter the bottomless gap between thoughts, beneath thoughts. See if you can directly experience whatever is not thought—the luminous awareness that exists prethought or beyond or beneath thought, or after all thought has ceased. Trace the source of all of your thoughts, feelings, experiences, physical sensations, and perceptions. Notice how they arise, and, after they arise, where they are in your present experience and where they go. See if you can follow the disillusion point back into the luminous void that is centerless—the openness that is everything’s ultimate identity, the great Who, the great What that is known as buddha nature. And if you cannot find anything to follow, just rest in that great silence, and be nothing for just one instant. Being nothing but pure awareness for an instant would be transformative in itself, and more than enough. Emaho!

When the mind starts to move, as it will, and thoughts and feelings and physical sensations again begin to proliferate, turn the mind upon itself again instead of looking outward at outer phenomena, projections, and perceptions. Turn the searchlight inward and mind the mind, becoming more keenly aware of awareness itself. Continue this laserlike questioning of who and what is experiencing, who is thinking, who is hearing, who, what, where, how and then let go and release—drop everything: drop body and mind—and sense who or what is present between thoughts and when thought has ceased, even for a moment. If you discover that you really do not know who you are, then that is enough. That is what is true for you in this moment, and that is sufficient truth for now.

Lama Surya Das. « Natural Radiance. » “

“Soh Wei Yu

Admin

· 4m ·

I flipped through Three Pillars of Zen by Phillip Kapleau Roshi. Seems like there are many good instructions on self-enquiry and self-realisation. Going to put it as a book recommendation in AtR guide.
(It's also highly recommended by
Angelo Gerangelo
)

Aaron Dorje
My favourite book on Zen by a mile. Indeed, for me, a rare case in which one book covers almost everything you'd need to know about a particular area of Buddhism
Guides to meditation (the one on the koan 'mu' helped me have a major En experience),
doctrine,
teacher exchanges with students
and wonderful stories of enlightenment (a rare thing: but its comforting that at least one tradition is evidence of the fact that a determined person can reach at least some of the enlightenments with a determined effort within a finite time).”

“16th June 2010

I answered someone's questions by e-mail regarding Self Inquiry practice.

Hi,

Qn: Thanks!

Could you summarize your method for practice? As you know, I am very interested in obtaining I AM state. I am interested in any method except Vipassana.

Soh:

The I AM is already fully present right now, so much so that it is like asking 'how do I obtain my eyes?'. You cannot obtain your eye, you are already seeing with your eyes. It will be silly to go looking/searching outward (with your eyes) for your eyes. Similarly, it will be silly to go looking outward (through your Self) for your Self. You just have to notice that all along, you are the seeing! You are the non objective Seer, so to go looking for your Self outside is to look into the wrong direction. So know that there is no need to look for Awareness and Presence. It is simply a matter of pointing out, noticing, realizing that Awareness is already present and is what you are. It is a simple statement/description of fact, and not a prescription to go out and search for it. You will realize that You Are, and that

is an ever-present fact that always has been so. When you realize, you realize you gained nothing new from it: you do not enter a new state, you simply realize something you overlooked all along.

Nevertheless, the method is indeed important to give rise to realization. Any method that leads to realization must be **direct** - means it must be a means that makes a practitioner bypass all the mind's conceptualizations and inference processes which are all indirect and secondary (which is not a direct realization and experience of your true essence and hence leaves doubts), so that you can touch directly and with certainty the essence of your Being without intermediary. On hindsight there was a period when I first started practicing self-inquiry where I was still intellectualizing about this, like how should I practice self inquiry, what does asking 'Before birth Who am I' mean and leads to, etc, which are all sidetracks and distractions because it is still using the mind and indirect inference and hence not a 'direct' approach to realize the essence of Being.

So do beware of intellectualizing these things, because it will not lead to Self-Realization - only the direct approach to investigate and look (a non-conceptual exploration) into the essence of Self leads to realization.

As you may have seen, my method of practice is self-inquiry. Self-Inquiry is the method that leads to direct experience and realization of your own essence, presence-awareness, so that no doubts can arise any more, because that is clearly seen as a self-evident, solid, undeniable fact of your being. One thing to note: having glimpses and recognitions of the I AM experience is not the same as having the realization – the latter is more important. Something I think is quite important, which Thusness wrote to me last year when I have had glimpses and recognitions/experiences of the Witness, but not experienced the Realization, a.k.a. 'Certainty of Being' (also see the post I made on 14 May 2010, on the conversation I had with Thusness about the different phases of I AM in February 2009): Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives (see the first part)

As for the method of self inquiry, I wrote this on my forum about two weeks ago, highlighted in red:

Begin by investigating this sense of existence, this sense of being. What is it? Who am I? This is not meant to be verbally or mentally recited (as Self-Inquiry teacher Zen/Ch'an Master Hsu Yun says, if you want to chant, chanting the name of Amitabha Buddha wholeheartedly will be more meritorious than chanting Who am I? or Who is chanting Buddha?), nor should it be an intellectual inquiry by engaging the mind in concepts to figure things out. No. Rather it is a non-conceptual and non-verbal exploration, investigation, examination of this sense of Presence, what is this Self, what is true, beyond all thoughts and conceptualizations and images we have about who I am. Your conceptualizing mind needs to calm down for true insight to arise (but calmness alone does not result in insight - inquiry does). The inquiry 'Who am I' is a tool to turn the attention inward, to turn the light around and investigate our essential being so that direct realization of this 'I', Beingness, AMness can occur.

Keep inquiring in that manner until unshakeable conviction arises through a sudden illumination: the undoubtable sense that I AM, which is beyond all thoughts and concepts - this undeniable, undoubtable sense of presence and existence that is at the same time aware and knows itself and aware of everything. It is both present, and aware. As I wrote: You Are

That Knowing which is certain that You Are! The distinction between knower, knowing, and known dissolve into That. You Are That!
After this realization, your understanding of spirituality will not remain intellectual/conceptual.

However this is just the beginning, as Thusness said before in Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives: "this realization is not an end by itself, it is the beginning. If we are truthful and not over exaggerate and get carried away by this initial glimpse, we will realize that we do not gain liberation from this realization; contrary we suffer more after this realization. However it is a powerful condition that motivates a practitioner to embark on a spiritual journey in search of true freedom."

For me, I was asked by Thusness to contemplate on the koan "Before birth, Who am I?"

This was the koan that led both I and him to the realization of I AMness.

Essentially what you have to ask is 'Who am I?' Trace the radiance to its source. You are aware and present, this is undoubtable and undeniable. So Who/What is Aware? Trace the radiance to the source.

You hear sounds of bird chirping, so Who/What is Hearing? Turn the light around, trace the radiance to the source, listen to the listener, investigate 'What Listens', until you can say with absolute certainty and conviction that you realized your true nature. (btw, this is Guan Yin's method of practice - 反闻闻自性)

http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/401963

"Question: What is the mind of void and calm, numinous awareness?

Chinul: What has just asked me this question is precisely your mind of void and calm, numinous awareness. Why not trace back its radiance rather than search for it outside? For your benefit I will now point straight to your original mind so that you can awaken to it. Clear your minds and listen to my words.

From morning until evening, all during the 12 periods of the day, during all your actions and activities - whether seeing, hearing, laughing, talking, whether angry of happy, whether doing evil or good - ultimately who is it that is able to perform all these actions? Speak! If you say that it is the physical body which is acting, then at the moment when a man's life comes to an end, even though the body has not yet decayed, how is it that the eyes cannot see, the ears cannot hear, the nose cannot smell, the tongue cannot talk, the hands cannot grasp, the feet cannot run?

You should know that what is capable of seeing, hearing, moving and acting has to be your original mind; it is not your physical body. Furthermore, the four elements which make up the physical body are by nature void; they are like images in a mirror of the moon's reflection in water. How can they be clear and constantly aware, always bright and never obscured - and, upon activation, be able to put into operation sublime functions as numerous as the sands of the Ganges? For this reason it is said: "Drawing water and carrying firewood are spiritual powers and sublime functions."

There are many points at which to enter the noumenon. I will indicate one approach which will allow you to return to the source.

Chinul: Do you hear the sound of that crow cawing and that magpie calling?

Student: Yes.

Chinul: Trace them back and listen to your hearing-nature. Do you hear any sounds?

Student: At that place, sound and discrimination do not obtain.

Chinul: Marvelous! Marvelous! This is Avalokitesvara's method for entering the noumenon. Let me ask you again. You said that sounds and discrimination do not obtain at that place. But since they do not obtain, isn't the hearing-nature just empty space at such a time?

Student: Originally it is not empty. It is always bright and never obscured.

Chinul: What is this essence which is not empty?

Student: Words cannot describe it."

When walking, you can notice that the body in itself is inert like a log, after the life force has left the body after death the body becomes a corpse. But right now, your body is alive and functioning well, so next time when you are walking or jogging on the street you can inquire on 'Who is dragging this corpse along?' Certainly the corpse cannot walk or move by itself without the power of the Source/Consciousness/Life. What is this core/source of aliveness? Who is it?

So you can do self inquiry in all kinds of situations: hearing a bird chirping (or experiencing anything else - who/what is aware?), walking on the street (who is dragging this corpse along?), or simply sitting meditation (just ask Before birth, Who am I?), etc. Before birth does not need to trigger imagination of what existed in time before your birth such as what happened 100 or 1000 years ago or at the big bang, it is much simpler and immediate than that. It is about finding out what you are before notions of time arise, it is about finding out what are you at/as this instant presence before a moment of thought occurs, no rumination is required. Anything perceived through the five senses such as your hands and legs are stuff given birth by your parents decades ago, but what are you prior to what is perceivable by the five senses or imaginable by thought? Don't look at the past for an answer, look at You as this instant Presence. A popular koan nowadays is "Who is chanting Buddha?" but I don't ask this because I seldom chant in the first place, so it may not be as powerful/appropriate for my situation. But whatever it is, it still comes down to this... keep turning the light around and investigate Who am I? I do not want to give people too much to anticipate or expect, but based on my own experience and Thusness's, and observations of others practicing self inquiry, that practice should lead to realization in a few years of practice. It could even be a few months of diligent practice... it depends. You must be very interested to know the truth of your being, to resolve the matter of Who You Are. I believe this is what Zen means by

'great doubt leads to great realization'. The initial realization should not take too long, though there is a long process of deepening/unfolding of further insights.

p.s. For Self-Inquiry taught in Ch'an/Zen, check out Ch'an Master Hsu Yun's teachings.

For Self-Inquiry taught in Advaita, Ramana Maharshi comes to mind.

But there is no essential difference in method taught as far as self inquiry is concerned as taught between these two teachers, as far as I know.

Qn: BTW, does you or Thusness have the power to help out people like me?

Excerpt from

http://nisargadattasmessage.blogspot.com/2006/11/gleanings-from-nisargadatta-now.html

"Nisargadatta Maharaj told me the only way you can help anyone is to take them beyond the need for further help and he did that by showing me what I was not....this body and mind. - He did not and could not show me or explain to me what is the Truth or actual Reality of all things. because That cannot be put into words or seen as an object. - I had to do my own inner work and see the Truth for myself. - See and acknowledge this present awareness that you cannot negate or grasp and you too will be beyond the need for further help. - No guru, new age spiritual master, or outer teacher can do it for you, you have to see it for yourself....."" - Soh's E-Journal entry in 2010

Someone shared on Reddit: "**Turn the Light Around**

One of the most frequent instructions ZMs gave is to turn our light around.

Sengcan

>To return to the root is to find the meaning, but to pursue appearances is to miss the source. At the moment of turning the light of awareness around, there is going beyond appearance and emptiness.

Linji:

>You must right now turn your light around and shine it on yourselves, not go seeking somewhere else. Then you will understand that in body & mind you are no different from the ancestors and buddhas, and that there is nothing to do.

Yuanwu:

>The most important thing is for people of great faculties and sharp wisdom to turn the light of mind around and shine back and clearly awaken to this mind before a single thought is born...Turn the light around and reflect back. Your true nature is clear and still and as-it-is. Empty through and accept it.

Hongzhi:

>Take the backward step and directly reach the middle of the circle from where the light issues forth.

In case you're not familiar with this instruction and haven't tried it, turning the light around means to "take the backwards step" by stopping our typical mode of leaning forward into our experiences of thoughts, emotions, and sensory data, and instead direct our attention "backward" to our pure being (i.e. become aware of our own existence, focused on the feeling of "I am," the light of presence-awareness, the ground of the mind, etc.).

What's interesting is that these same instructions appear again and again across many traditions.

Taoist Master Lu Yan:

>Turning the light around is not turning around the light of one body, but turning around the very energy of creation...If you can look back again and again into the source of mind, whatever you are doing, not sticking to any image of person or self at all, then this is turning the light around wherever you are. This is the finest practice.

Tilopa (Pith Instructions to Naropa on Mahamudra):

>When you look at the center of the sky, seeing will cease. Likewise, when mind looks at mind, the swarms of thoughts cease and unsurpassable enlightenment is attained.

Ramana Maharshi:

>“If the mind (the attention) is thus well fixed in sadhana (attending to Self), a power of divine Grace will then rise from within of its own accord and, Subjugating the mind, will take it to the Heart”. What is this power of divine Grace ? It is nothing but the perfect clarity of our existence the form of the Supreme Self (paramatman), ever shining with abundant Grace in the heart.

Nisargadatta Maharaj:

>Establish yourself firmly in the awareness of ‘I am’. This is the beginning and also the end of all endeavor.

What's captured my attention recently is that these same instructions, this same practice, is prescribed as something to do both before and after awakening.

Huineng:

>If in all places whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, your pure unified direct mind does not move from the site of enlightenment, truly making a pure land, this is called absorption in one practice.

Yuanwu:

>Just keep boring in -- you must penetrate through completely. Haven't you seen Muzhou's saying? 'If you haven't gained entry, you must gain entry. Once you have gained entry, don't turn your back on your old teacher.' When you

manage to work sincerely and preserve your wholeness for a long time, and you go through a tremendous process of smelting and forging and refining and polishing in the furnace of a true teacher, you grow nearer and more familiar day by day, and your state becomes secure and continuous. Keep working like this, maintaining your focus for a long time still, to make your realization of enlightenment unbroken from beginning to end.

>...You must continue this way without interruption forever - this is the best.

For me, this is my current day-to-day practice, trying to maintain it at all times. I "build the muscle" by doing this in seated practice for 30 minutes or so, giving myself quiet space to get acquainted and then come back to it again and again throughout the day as I remember. I'm really enjoying it, but it's tough because there's no real "anchor" like in more traditional forms of meditation. It's being rather than doing.

What are your experiences with turning the light around? Does it make sense to you? Is this something you have done or currently do?

If you haven't tried this, what are you waiting for?"

I started having glimpses of I AMness since 2007, but it wasn't until early 2010 that I came to a point of total certainty or doubtless Self-Realization. Here's an example of a glimpse and John Tan's advise:

"Session Start: Sunday, 25 October, 2009

(2:07 AM) AEN: just now it occurred to me that the places i've been are hazy like a dream, they come and go.... then i realised my thoughts also are like a dream, they come and go... when i dropped that theres only my own existence and presence left which is real and not hazy at all and doesnt come and go

(2:34 AM) AEN: then for a short while i was only aware of my own existence... until i got distracted :P

(5:16 AM) Thusness: not bad... :) That is the beginning phase of I AM.

(5:19 AM) Thusness: first drop your thoughts, drop all sort of mental chattering, drop everything, don't think of non-dual. Allow yourself to be filled with only this sense of existence. This is the first phase.

(5:19 AM) AEN: icic..

(5:20 AM) Thusness: then you will realize what existence is. 😊 "

"My Guru ordered me to attend to the sense 'I am' and to give attention to nothing else. I just obeyed. I did not follow any particular course of breathing, or meditation, or study of scriptures. Whatever happened, I would turn away my attention from it and remain with the sense 'I am'. It may look too simple. My Guru told me: '...Go back to that state of pure being, where the 'I am' is still in its purity before it got contaminated with 'I am this' or 'I am that.' Your burden is of false self-identifications—abandon them all. Trust me, I tell you: you are Divine. Take it as the absolute truth. Your joy is divine, your suffering is divine too. All comes from God. Remember it always. You are God, your

will alone is done.' I did believe him and soon realized how wonderfully true and accurate were his words. I did not condition my mind by thinking, "I am God, I am wonderful, I am beyond." I simply followed his instruction, which was to focus the mind on pure being, "I am," and stay in it. I used to sit for hours together, with nothing but the "I am" in my mind and soon the peace and joy and deep all-embracing love became my normal state. In it all disappeared—myself, my guru, the life I lived, the world around me. Only peace remained, and unfathomable silence.“ – Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj

“When I say 'I AM', I do not mean a separate entity with a body as its nucleus. I mean the totality of Being, the ocean of consciousness, the entire universe of all that is and knows. I have nothing to desire for I am complete forever.”

- Nisargadatta Maharaj, I AM THAT ch 36

“Self Enquiry, Neti Neti and the Process of Elimination - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/05/self-enquiry-neti-neti-and-process-of.html

I often say, self enquiry is not a mantra. It's not something you just repeat mentally "who am i.. who am i..." it's not that sort of practice. It is an investigation, an exploration, an inquiry into the true nature of identity and the true nature of consciousness.

The inquiry/koan "Before Birth, who am I?" has a dual purpose: the elimination of all conceptual identification (ego) and to discover one's underlying radiant Consciousness, or Pure Presence/Beingness.

During my journey of self-enquiry, which spanned over two years (2008-Feb 2010), involving meditative contemplations such as “before birth, who am I?” During the process, this line of questioning, we eliminate all the candidates for my self -- I am not my hands, my legs, my name, my thoughts. They come and go and are observed, they are not me. So what am I? As John Tan said before, “you cannot know the “Ultimate Source” without the process of elimination”. What does it eliminate? The conceptual identification of self with various mentally constructed and perceived objects. This is why "before birth" is asked, as it directs the mind to this elimination. And what does that elimination reveal? Who am I, what is this radiant Being that stands alone revealed after that process of elimination?

Ramana Maharshi said:

"1. Who am I ?

The gross body which is composed of the seven humours (dhatus), I am not; the five cognitive sense organs, viz. the senses of hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell, which apprehend their respective objects, viz. sound, touch, colour, taste, and odour, I am not; the five cognitive sense- organs, viz. the organs of speech, locomotion, grasping, excretion, and procreation, which have as their respective functions speaking, moving, grasping, excreting, and enjoying, I am not; the five vital airs, prana, etc., which perform respectively the five functions of in-breathing, etc., I am not; even the mind which thinks, I am not; the nescience too, which is endowed only with the residual impressions of objects, and in which there are no objects and no functioning's, I am not.

2. If I am none of these, then who am I?

After negating all of the above-mentioned as ‘not this’, ‘not this’, that Awareness which alone remains - that I am.

3. What is the nature of Awareness?

The nature of Awareness is existence-consciousness-bliss"

- continue reading at *https://files.awakeningtoreality.com/who_am_I.pdf*

This line of questioning (before birth, who am I?) led me to a moment in silent meditation where everything subsided, leaving only a doubtless unshakeable certainty of pure existence and presence.

So eliminating concepts until none is left with some prompting like self enquiry or zen koan will allow one to reach a complete state of stillness (stillness of the conceptual mind) and authenticate presence/clarity/radiance directly.

While this method effectively dissolves conceptual attachments and reveals the radiant core of Consciousness, it fails to address the view of inherency and the dualities of subject and object or the deeper insight of both self and phenomena as merely nominal and overcome views that reifies the four extremes. Sometimes we call it "inherentness" in short, and inherentness means concepts being reified and mistaken as real. But that requires deeper insights and realisations and is crucial for releasing the deeper afflictive and knowledge obscurations. Merely the pausing of conceptual thinking or even revealing one's Radiance is insufficient to realise its nature.

At this point, after radiance is realized, as John Tan points out, "before we can hop into the next path and focus on radiance and natural state, without recognizing implication of conventional and seeing through them, there will be ongoing cognitive as well as emotional obscurations. How deep and far can you go? Much less talking about natural state when one can't even distinguish what is conventional and what is ultimate."

As John Tan said before,

“When we authenticate radiance clarity directly, we have a first hand experiential taste of what is called the "ultimate free from all conceptual elaborations" but mind is not "free from conceptual elaborations".”

I also wrote some time back:

"Seeing selfness or cognizance as a subject and phenomena as objects is the fundamental elaboration that prevents the taste of appearances as radiance clarity.. then even after anatta, there are still the subtle cognitive obscurations that reified phenomena, arising and ceasing, substantial cause and effect, inherent production and so on.

So elaboration is not just coarse thinking like labelling but to me is like a veil of reification projecting and distorting radiant appearances and its nature.

Another way to put it is that the fundamental conceptual elaboration that obscures reality/suchness is to reify self and phenomena in terms of the extremes of existence and non existence through not apprehending the nature of mind/appearance.

...

If you mean just authenticate radiance clarity like I AM, then it's just nonconceptual taste and realisation of presence.

That moment is nondual and nonconceptual and unfabricated but it doesnt mean the view of inherency is seen through. Since fundamental ignorance is untouched the radiance will continue to be distorted into a subject and object."

"The process of eradicating avidyā (ignorance) is conceived... not as a mere stopping of thought, but as the active realization of the opposite of what ignorance misconceives. Avidyā is not a mere absence of knowledge, but a specific misconception, and it must be removed by realization of its opposite. In this vein, Tsongkhapa says that one cannot get rid of the misconception of 'inherent existence' merely by stopping conceptuality any more than one can get rid of the idea that there is a demon in a darkened cave merely by trying not to think about it. Just as one must hold a lamp and see that there is no demon there, so the illumination of wisdom is needed to clear away the darkness of ignorance." - Napper, Elizabeth, 2003, p. 103"

It is important however to note that Gelug and non Gelug authors may have different definitions of conceptualities, as John Tan pointed out years ago: "Not exactly, both have some very profound points. Mipham "conceptualities" is not only referring to symbolic layering but also self-view which is more crucial. Mipham made it very clear and said the gelug mistake "conceptualities" as just symbolic and mental overlay, which is not what he is referring then he laid down 3 types of conceptualities. Same for dharmakirti also...there is the gross definition and the more refine definitions."

However, for the purpose of beginners trying to realize the I AM, just going through and focusing on self-enquiry and the process of elimination mentioned earlier is sufficient to result in Self Realisation.

You should read this article https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/the-direct-path-to-your-real-self.html as this author was able to bring several to the realization of I AM, and explains well the process of self enquiry and the process of elimination.

Question: " Thank you Soh, much appreciated.

I'm familiar with some of the material but i'll work my way through it all again.

Can you say anything more specifically about the quality of the question "what is aware of self" as opposed to "who am I"? If it leaves me in an "emptier" experience is it necessarily a better question for me, or is it important to keep trying to deconstruct that ickily shifting sense of self that "who am I" points at?"

Soh replied: " Who am i doesnt point at sense of self, it lets you see that the sense of self is not in fact who you are. You are what is aware and prior to that sense of self. So all objects conceived or perceived that is mistaken as Self are naturally negated as neti neti - not this, not this. And so you revert back to the Source, or the pure Beingness prior to all concepts and sense of self.

Who am i points at the pure I-I prior to all conceived sense of self and perceived objects. In other words it points to the same thing as "what is aware" is pointing at.

The fact that the sense of self is as you put it, "ickily shifting" is already a hint to you that it is not in fact who you truly are at all, it is not your true self. So inquiring who am I naturally negates that shifting sense of self as being a possible candidate for who you are. And so seeing this you naturally deconstruct that and trace back to the Source in self enquiry."

https://www.facebook.com/groups/207646316294607/posts/2330941190631765/ -

"THE CONSCIOUSNESS THAT KNOWS, "I AM"

Ramana Maharshi describes the sense of 'I' as the fundamental, self-evident awareness that is always present. It is the consciousness that knows, "I am." This 'I' is not the body, mind, or ego but the pure, unchanging awareness that underlies all experiences. Ramana often refers to this as the 'I-I' or the true 'I'.

To know that it is the true 'I' Ramana speaks of, one must recognize that it is ever-present and self-luminous. Unlike the transient thoughts and sensations that come and go, this 'I' remains constant. It is the silent witness to all that occurs without being affected by it. When all thoughts and identifications with the body and mind are relinquished through self-inquiry, what remains is this pure sense of being.

Ramana advises that through persistent self-inquiry, asking "Who am I?" and turning attention inward, the false identifications fall away. The true 'I' reveals itself not as an object to be seen but as the very essence of our existence. It is experienced as a deep, inherent sense of presence and peace, devoid of attributes, distinctions, or forms.

In essence, this sense of 'I' is simply the state of pure awareness, the unchanging consciousness that is always present. Knowing it is the true 'I' comes from the direct experience of this unbroken, self-evident awareness that transcends all temporary experiences and phenomena."

Do watch this: https://youtu.be/ZYjI6gh9RxE?si=6M4zn5tHE7fQlJcr

Also watch this: https://youtu.be/MTvyLfCd9jI?si=9sUAHomIpD76iQn-

Labels: Conceptuality, Freedom from Elaborations, I AMness, Self Enquiry |”

Writing to Mother on Meditation and Self-Enquiry (with Comments on Anatta Below)

- **Soh Wei Yu**

  46m ·

  Shared with Your friends

  Meditation and Self-Enquiry

  I wrote this to my mother today in Chinese about the purpose of practicing and to encourage her to meditate. English translation below.

  参禅是要参究本来面目是什么，自性是什么，不是要达到一种境界

  是要发现，体悟，什么是自性、觉性。要达到完全没有疑惑才是”悟”

  要一切念头断后还要回光返照，我是谁？在觉知的是什么？如果有念头回答是这个那个就错，因为答案不在语言文字，所以把念头舍掉再继续参、回光返照。这是明心最直接的法。

  要每天打坐，元音老人叫弟子每天打坐两小时。

  如果不能把心静下来到无念，很难开悟。你要想想你最容易把心静下的方法是什么？是打坐吗？还是念佛持咒？什么方法如果能安心都可以，可是要每天修，不能断断续续。

  可是无念还不是开悟，达到无念时还要回光返照，找出了了分明的是谁，是什么，才能悟到自性，不然你的打坐只是一种静态，还没悟到自性。

  悟到自性后只是明心，还不算是悟性（人法二空之理、登地菩萨），还要继续。所以”明心见性”其实是两个：先明心（真心），后见性。

  所以要努力修到明心见性。

六祖慧能说过：不识本心学法无益。

English translation:

Contemplating Zen [Koan] is about inquiring what exactly is our original face, what is our Self-Nature, it is not about achieving a meditative state.

It is rather to discover, to realize, what exactly is our Self-Nature/Awareness. One must reach a state of utter doubtlessness/certainty to be considered '[Self-]Realization'.

After the utter cessation of all thoughts, one must turn one's light around to find out, What am I? What is it that is Aware? If there is a thought which answers 'it is this or that' then that's wrong, because the real answer lies not in words and letters. Therefore cast aside those thoughts and continue inquiring, turning the light around. This is the most direct method to apprehend one's Mind.

You should meditate everyday. Master Yuan Yin asks his student to meditate two hours a day.

If you are unable to quiet your mind to a state of no-thought, it will be difficult to realise. You should think carefully what is the best method for you to still your mind? Is it meditation? Or is it chanting the Buddha's name and reciting mantras? Whatever methods which calms the mind will do, but you have to practice everyday, not only practice intermittently or occasionally.

However, reaching a state of no-thought is not awakening. Upon reaching a state of no-thought, continue turning the light around to find out Who is that which is the Clear Knowingness? What is it? Then you will realise your Self-Nature. Otherwise your meditation is merely a state of stillness, not yet realising Self-Nature.

Realizing Self-Nature is only Apprehending one's Mind, it is not yet realizing Nature [the nature of mind and phenomena] (the principle of the twofold emptiness of persons and phenomena as realized by a first bhumi Bodhisattva), therefore one must continue. Hence, "Apprehending Mind and Realising Nature" consists of two parts: first apprehend one's Mind (True Mind), later realize [Empty] Nature.

Therefore practice hard to Apprehend Mind and Realize Nature.

The Sixth Ch'an Patriarch said: It is useless to learn the dharma without recognising original Mind.

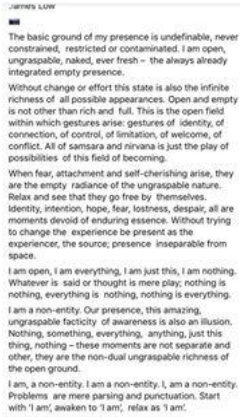
[Be Still and Know that I AM / Self-Enquiry]

-

Soh Wei Yu The I AM is not about having an experience, it is about discovering and realizing what You are. It is not something you do, not something you experience, but something that is realized. Eureka. So find out what is the experiencer. Who and what am I?

When you realize that with complete certainty, you simply know (or rather, is simply the Knowingness) of what you are and don't get confused about conceptual notions of a self entity that is existing and dissolving in time and so on. It is pure, radiant, timeless Presence.

Tracing back all thoughts and perceptions to its source, there is just a radiant light of Being. Before birth, I AM.


The basic ground of my presence is undefinable, never constrained, restricted or contaminated. I am open, ungraspable, naked, ever fresh – the always already integrated empty presence.

Without change or effort this state is also the infinite richness of all possible appearances. Open and empty is not other than rich and full. This is the open field within which gestures arise: gestures of identity, of connection, of control, of limitation, of welcome, of conflict. All of samsara and nirvana is just the play of possibilities of this field of becoming.

When fear, attachment and self-cherishing arise, they are the empty radiance of the ungraspable nature. Relax and see that they go free by themselves. Identity, intention, hope, fear, lostness, despair, all are moments devoid of enduring essence. Without trying to change the experience be present as the experiencer, the source; presence inseparable from space.

I am open, I am everything, I am just this, I am nothing. Whatever is said or thought is mere play; nothing is nothing, everything is nothing, nothing is everything.

I am a non-entity. Our presence, this amazing, ungraspable facticity of awareness is also an illusion. Nothing, something, everything, anything, just this thing, nothing – these moments are not separate and other, they are the non-dual ungraspable richness of the open ground.

I am, a non-entity. I am a non-entity. I, am a non-entity. Problems are mere parsing and punctuation. Start with 'I am', awaken to 'I am', relax as 'I am'.

- Like
- · Reply
- · 42m
- · Edited
-

Soh Wei Yu https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../realization...

1. On Experience and Realization

Comments by Soh: Also see related article - I AM Experience/Glimpse/Recognition vs I AM Realization (Certainty of Being)

[excerpt snipped]

禅

awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com

Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives

- Like
- · Reply
- · Remove Preview
- · 41m

Active Now

William Lim So the million dollar question is :

HOW DO YOYou REALIZE?

HOW DO YOYou INVOKE EUREKA?

- Like
- · Reply
- · 16m

Soh Wei Yu Just investigate who you are

- Like
- · Reply
- · 15m

Active Now

William Lim Besides description, what's the prescription?

- Like

- · Reply
- · 15m
-

Soh Wei Yu Before thought, there is still a knowingness of existence. The knowingness of existence is not a subject-object knowing -- The Knowingness is the Self, it is not a knower knowing the self. You keep inquiring Before Birth, Who am I?/Who am I? until there is a quality of complete certainty of Existence, and that you find that certainty to be more real and obvious and certain than anything else you have known.

Just keep inquiring who you are until you arrive at that.

-
- Like
- · Reply
- · 13m
- · Edited
- Active Now

William Lim I tried that for two days... nothing yet :)

-
- Like
- · Reply
- · 10m
-

Soh Wei Yu Without a thought, do you exist? Are you aware that you exist? What is existence-awareness at that moment?

-
- Like
- · Reply
- · 9m
-

Soh Wei Yu The first two questions simply usually returns concepts like 'yes'. But it doesn't lead to complete non-conceptual certainty. The third one, or questions and koans like Who am I? or What am I? leads to that non-

conceptual certainty and realization. It requires penetrating all discursive thinking to arrive at the actuality of the fundamental ground.

-
  - Like
  - · Reply
  - · 7m
-

Soh Wei Yu When you get a sense of being a Living Spirit, go deeply into that. Don't think, just come to the point of complete stillness of Being. “Be still, and know that I am God.”

- Like
- · Reply
- · 3m

“Don’t overcomplicate the “how”. It is just simple, innocent inquiry into “who am I?” driven by genuine desire to discover the truth of your Being.” – Soh

Soh’s koan between 2008 to 2010 that led to I AM realization was “Before birth, who am I?” But for some people it may not work well, in which they should change the questioning as follows.

Soh Wei Yu shared a link.

Admin

· 16m ·

I wrote this for someone having difficulty with the koan "Before birth, who am I?"

"You said before birth who am I leads to conceptuality for you. I told you that you should change your koan to “before thinking, what am I?”

There is a similar koan in the past

元音老人

从前有一位师父参“如何是父母未生前本来面目？”参了多年，未能开悟。后来碰到一位大德，请他慈悲指示个方便。大德问：“你参什么话头？”他答道：“我参如何是我父母未生前的本来面目？”大德道：“你参得太远了，应向近处看。”他问：“怎么向近处看？”大德道：“不要看父母未生前，须看一念未生以前是什么？”禅者言下大悟。

大家坐在这里，请看这一念未生前是什么？它在各人面门放光，朗照一切而毫无粘着，无知无见而又非同木石，这是什么？就在这里猛着精彩，就是悟道。所以说“至道无难，言端语端”啊！

Soh's translation:

Yuan Yin Lao Ren:

In the past there was a Master who contemplated, "what is the original face before my parents were born?" He contemplated for many years, but did not awaken. Later on he encountered a great noble person and requested for his compassionate guidance. The noble one asked: "What koan did you contemplate?" He replied: "I contemplated what is the original face before my parents were born?" Noble one replied: "You contemplated too far away, should look nearby." He asked: "How should I look nearby?" Noble one replied: "Don't look into what is before your parents were born, need to look at: before a thought arise, what is it?" The Zen practitioner immediately attained great awakening. Everyone that is sitting here, please look at what is this before a moment of thought's arising? IT is radiating light in front of everybody's [sense] doors, the brightness radiates everything yet is without the slightest clinging, nothing is known and nothing is seen yet it is not similar to wood and stones, what is This? IT is right here shining in its brilliancy, this is awakening to the Way. Therefore it is said, "the great way is not difficult, just cease speech and words"!

“Something I always say when you are doing self enquiry or any other contemplations and meditations, this is crucial:

"We think it's all about like, again, because of our modern mind, we almost think everything can be solved through some sort of technology. Right, oh, I just need to do it different, there must be some secret trick to inquiry, that's our technological mind-set. Sometimes that's a mindset that is very useful to us. But, we don't want to let that dominate our spirituality. Because as I witnessed, the intensity of the living inquiry that's more important than all the techniques.

When somebody Just Has To Know. Even if that's kind of driving them half crazy for a while. And, that attitude is as important or more important than all the ways we work with that attitude, you know, the spiritual practices, the meditations and various inquiries and various different things, sort of practices. If we engage in the practices because they are practices, you know like, ok I just do these because this is what I'm told to do, and hopefully it will have some good effect. That's different than being engaged, when you're actually being deeply interested in what you're inquiring about, and what you're actually meditating upon. It's that quality of real, actual interest, something even more than interest. It is a kind of compulsion, I know I was saying earlier don't get taken in by compulsion, but there is/can be a kind of compulsion. And that's as valuable as anything else going on in you, actually."
- Adyashanti

This is related to Zen's great doubt, great faith and great perseverance. Especially the aspect of Great Doubt.” – Soh, 2020

“ANNAMALAI SWAMI – FINAL TALKS

'YOYou SEEM TO BE LACKING INTENSITY'

Q: Bhagavan wanted to know the answer to the question 'Who am I?' He seemed to find the answer straight away. When I ask the question when I try to find out what the Self is, I can reject thoughts that arise as being 'not me', but nothing else happens. I don't get the answer that Bhagavan did, so I am beginning to wonder why I am asking the question.

Annamalai Swami: You say that you are not getting the right answer.
--- Who is this 'you'? Who is not getting the right answer? ---

Question: Why should I ask? Asking has not produced the right answer so far.

Annamalai Swami: You should persist and not give up so easily. When you intensely inquire 'Who am I?' the intensity of your inquiry takes you to the real Self. It is not that you are asking the wrong question.

You seem to be lacking intensity in your inquiry. You need a one-pointed determination to complete this inquiry properly. Your real Self is not the body or the mind. You will not reach the Self while thoughts are dwelling on anything that is connected with the body or the mind.

Question: So it is the intensity of the inquiry that determines whether I succeed or not.

Annamalai Swami: Yes. If the inquiry into the Self is not taking place thoughts will be on the body and the mind. And while those thoughts are habitually there, there will be an underlying identification: 'I am the body; I am the mind.' This identification is something that happened at a particular point in time. It is not something that has always been there. And what comes in time also goes eventually, for nothing that exists in time is permanent.

The Self, on the other hand, has always been there. It existed before the ideas about the body and the mind arose, and it will be there when they finally vanish. The Self always remains as it is: as peace, without birth, without death.

Through the intensity of your inquiry, you can claim that state as your own.

Inquire into the nature of the mind by asking, with one-pointed determination, 'Who am I?' Mind is illusory and non-existent, just as the snake that appears on the rope is illusory and non-existent.

Dispel the illusion of the mind by intense inquiry and merge in the peace of the Self. That is what you are, and that is what you always have been.

LWB, p. 41"

Someone asked: "Yeah though I think at this stage to reach the first I AM realization I'd like to embark on the direct path rather than the gradual path. I've read Ramana, Arya, Rupert Spira etc. and have a basic understanding of self inquiry. I have found it frustrating though because unlike noting in vipassana, I don't know what to do after my mind just blanks to the question "who am I" (since intellectually i can comprehend no self and that I'm not my thoughts/feelings etc). I don't know if with self inquiry one feels a sense of progress like those that could come with vipassana ala ingram's map? I guess I would like to persist with self inquiry but have a bad feeling that the method isn't for me right now, but have no way of knowing...

And yes I've read eckhart tolle. In fact power of now was what somehow tilted me into bit of a spiritual crisis (separate topic) in the sense that a spirituality search suddenly took center stage. I can't explain it but am taking it as a sign that "my" awareness really wants to know itself 🤔

2:12 PM

Soh: looking for signs of progress is another kind of distraction that diverts attention into thinking and concepts. although, the signs of progress include things like having glimpses of Presence (not to the degree of complete certainty) and so on. if one is looking for external signs, it just distracts oneself into the realm of stories and content rather than looking directly into what Presence-Awareness is

john wheeler also has interesting pointers

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2026/02/awakening-to-natural-state-by-john.html

also https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/the-direct-path-to-your-real-self.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2007/05/some-writings-on-non-duality-by-ken.html

i think these offer some good pointers

"I can't explain it but am taking it as a sign that "my" awareness really wants to know itself 🤔"

Soh: this is important and good, this means you are ready to do self enquiry. doing koan or self enquiry without that 疑情 (sensation of doubt) is not going to be effective, because it ends up like mantra chanting "who am i... who am i". hsu yun's articles are good as it is about self enquiry. it says if you are just chanting who am i like a mantra, then it is actually more meritorious to chant amitabha buddha's name instead

but since you are enquiring with real 疑情 (sensation of doubt) it is genuine self enquiry

In zen it is said great doubt, great awakenining. small doubt, small awakening. no doubt, no awakening.

the problem with most people doing self enquiry or koan is that they lack that attitude or requisite... great doubt, great faith and great preserverence

these three elements are sufficient

Absolutely essential for those practicing self-inquiry:

http://www.kirtimukha.com/surfings/Cogitation/great_faith.htm

Great Faith, Great Doubt

On the pull between faith and doubt that can spark awakening - by a Zen teacher

Most of the work in Zen practice takes place while sitting zazen

because, in reality,

there's nothing anyone can give us.

There's nothing that we lack;

each one of us is perfect and complete.

That's why it is said that

there are no Zen teachers and nothing to teach.

But this truth must be realized by each one of us.

Great faith, great doubt, and great determination

are three essentials for that realization.

Great faith is the boundless faith in oneself and

in one's ability to realize oneself and make oneself free;

great doubt is the deep and penetrating doubt that asks:

Who am I?

What is life?

What is truth?

What is God?

What is reality?

Great faith and great doubt are in dynamic tension with each other;

they work to provide the real cutting edge of koan practice.

When great faith and great doubt are also accompanied by great determination --

the determination of "seven times knocked down, eight times up" --

we have at our disposal the power necessary

to break through our delusive way of thinking

and realize the full potential of our lives.

~ John Daido Loori" - Soh's E-Journal, 2011 https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/12/my-e-booke-journal.html

"~LONGCHENPA✨ 🌺

Do not allow your commitments to be undermined by social pressures or obstacles. Develop the ability to blend your experience of meditative equipoise with postmeditation activity. Do not relinquish your diligence until you have accomplished your goal. Develop the ability to appreciate the equal taste of whatever you encounter, whether it is to be eliminated or relied on."

"Soh: In my practice, there was a rather relentless inquiry to penetrate the truth of Being. This earnest inquiry keeps building up and up until it becomes a giant Great Doubt and mass of energy that propels its inquiry into not only sitting but even in walking, in daily activities -- Who am I??? Who is the one dragging this corpse along?? A very earnest zeal to penetrate the core of the matter and discover what my true Essence is.

So in sitting meditation, there was of course silence, but an inward attention to the core of Being/Presence/Existence, dwelling into that, discovering what that is, inquiring, etc. It was not so much an intellectual analysis but a drive to discover what I truly am before everything else -- before birth, what am I? Before thinking, what am I? Or just, who am I?

That, I say, is the direct path to Self-Realization.

So the emphasis is on discovering what is the Presence and Existence in the midst of silence, the emphasis is not on stillness, silence, as in a mental quiescence, which one can also achieve in other forms of mundane meditation that does not necessarily result in self-realization.

That being said, there are also those who define 'Silence' as inclusive of that aspect of Pure Presence, then realizing that with certainty is no different from the I AM/Self-Realization. Then that is correctly identifying/discovering the luminous essence. As Tenzin Wangyal said, "The gap between two thoughts is essence. But if in that gap there is a lack of presence, it becomes ignorance and we experience only a lack of awareness, almost an unconsciousness. If there is presence in the gap, then we experience the dharmakaya [the ultimate]."

Also,

"If the natural strength of awareness is not brought forth, a numb and inert state of stillness will never yield any progress whatsoever. So, it is crucial to bring forth the steady clarity of awareness."

—Padmasambhava

Like this website:

http://www.puresilence.org/what_is_pure_silence.htm

“What is Pure Silence?

There is a space within us, our brain, our being, which is and has always been there. This is the awareness which you have known all your life. It is your realization that you are. It is the same which has been at your birth, during your youth, now and when you will be dead. This is your "you-ness." Some have called this your true self. This is something that, no matter what has occurred in your life, has never changed. Yes, this has been permanent in you. You must see this. It's very hard to put all this into accurate words that describe this fully and it is even more difficult to imagine this. But if you stop reading now, close your eyes, and see what is there, you may begin to taste this. What is always there in you, despite your moods, your emotions, your thoughts? I know you know this. See what is there at the core of your being. It seems you and the rest of humanity have spent your entire lives running from this, fearing this, covering this. I do not know all the reasons why. Perhaps our brains have not evolved enough yet.

You have probably followed some belief, some tradition, someone else's words or teaching. But I offer you something else. Let go of the thoughts, the imagination, the emotions; let go of everything and see what is left. Do this, not because I am telling you this, but because it is truly what you want to find out once and for all. You want to know. I know you do. What is this thing called existence all about? And more than that, what is your place in all this? Who are you? What is your purpose?

Pure Silence is within you. It is not just the absence of sound, or lack of noise. It is the ground, the basis of your very being. There is nothing to find out, nothing to prove. Just listen with your whole being to what is here, now. It is the most amazing thing you can ever discover.

It is with you now. It is you. The only way to find this is to stop everything else. Everything! Just be!”

“What you are in essence is self-shining, pure intelligence. The very idea of shining implies a movement. Movement is energy. I call it ‘pure intelligence energy’. It is shining through your eyes. You cannot say what it is, and you cannot negate it either. It is ‘no thing’. It cannot be objectified. It ever expresses as that living, vibrant sense of presence, which translates through the mind as the thought ‘I am’. The primary thought ‘I am’ is not the reality. It is the closest the mind or thought can ever get to reality, for reality to the mind is inconceivable. It is no thing.

Without the thought ‘I am’, is it stillness? Is it silence? Or is there a vibrancy about it, a livingness, a self-shining. All these expressions are mental concepts or pointers towards it, but the bottom line is that you know that you are. You cannot negate that knowing that you are. It is not a dead, empty, silent stillness. It is not about keeping the mind silent, but seeing that what is prior to the mind is the livingness itself. It is very subtle. When you see that that is what you are, then the very subtleness expresses itself. That is the uncaused joy. Nisargadatta puts it beautifully. He puts it in the

negative: 'There is nothing wrong any more'. We think that we have to attain something and then stay there. Realize that you have never left it at any time. It is effortless. You don't have to try or strive or grasp or hold. You are That!"

- Sailor Bob Adamson

"I AM not speaking to any 'body'.
I AM not speaking to any 'mind'.
I AM speaking to THAT I AM that I AM,
to that PRESENCE AWARENESS,
that expresses through
the mind as the thought I AM.
Just THIS, NOTHING else."

- Sailor Bob Adamson

Angelo Gerangelo:

"Self-Inquiry

We've already touched on the question "Who am I?" a couple times. Now we're going to take that point of inquiry and supercharge it. We'll use this self-inquiry vehicle as a sort of depth charge. Its purpose is to plunge you down through all those layers of belief and personal narrative, right to the core of identity. If we do this the right way, it will detonate when it reaches that core. This detonation will blow a hole right through the bottom. "The bottom of what?" You might ask. The bottom of everything. We are going to blow a hole right through the bottom of reality. You didn't come all this way for nothing right?

"Blowing a hole through the bottom" is obviously a metaphor. The transformation that we're referring to is so radical that even dimension (bottom, top, near, far) will be seen to be an illusion. Still, it's a reasonably apt description. After my own awakening, these were the exact words that occurred to me. A couple of days into reality as I knew it dismantling itself, I was talking to a friend about what had happened. I knew I couldn't adequately put into words what had taken place. I also knew it was impossible to describe what had replaced the struggle and isolation I had previously considered "normal life." Yet my friend could sense that something had dramatically changed in me, and asked what had happened. The words came, "I was meditating and the bottom fell out." It was exactly like this. Oddly enough, when the bottom fell out, there was nothing for everything to fall into. The framework of reality as I had known it had completely deconstructed itself. What was left was something like a deep and pervasive peace, and that's how it remains. It's obvious that whatever I thought was real before was only a very small "model" of reality, something like a shadow on a wall. I had stumbled upon a possibility, a way of investigating perception, that completely altered the way I experience reality.

Self inquiry has the power to bring this about for anyone who is willing to take the plunge. By imbibing it with the will to awaken to our true nature, we give the self-inquiry vehicle power beyond the limits of what we are capable of on our own. In this way, the inquiry becomes something of a portal or a conduit through which we can come into contact

with forces altogether beyond the limits of the human dimension. Once this happens, you can no longer know yourself in the limited and definite way you had previously learned to perceive yourself. Your identity will find a new equilibrium with unbound consciousness, which is essentially limitless. The limitless experience of consciousness-Being, while astounding, is but the staging area for the more radical unfolding ahead. Yet it is a very important milestone in the process of realization.

Like any catalyst, this method of self inquiry functions best when the environmental conditions are favorable. Let's spend some time discussing the optimal conditions to support this process before we will delve into the mechanics of the inquiry itself. Here are the conditions:

Alert: This inquiry works best if we are alert, without straining. You don't want to be slack with your attention, daydreaming, or mind-wandering. On the other hand, it's unnecessary to be hyper-vigilant or to strain your attention into a hyper-focused state. You want to be alert enough to assure that nothing escapes your attention, including any thought. A relaxed and dilated (open) attention, engaged in the process of inquiry is ideal. It is something like driving an automobile in a city you are unfamiliar with. Unlike taking a long drive down the highway where you might zone out or daydream a bit, driving in an unfamiliar city requires you to keep your attention on the immediate environment. You won't be daydreaming or imagining events and places that aren't in your current experience. It can take a bit of practice to strike the right balance of alertness and relaxation. Keep practicing and you will find that sweet spot where you are neither daydreaming nor straining.

Curious: Genuine curiosity is necessary for this approach to work. It's my responsibility to relate the mechanics of this inquiry in a way that compels genuine curiosity. It's up to you to be willing to acknowledge that innocent curiosity and proceed from it. We often circumvent natural curiosity by moving our attention to a familiar but artificial mental construct when we find ourselves in the unknown. We do this to feel some sense of certainty. This means that when faced with the unknown we often cling to old habituated patterns of thinking to help us avoid admitting to ourselves that we really don't know. When this technique is applied correctly you will find yourself in the unknown rather quickly. The paradox here is that using thought to "cure" that sense of unknowing will undermine the inquiry. A willingness to remain in unguarded curiosity is the lamp that lights the way forward.

Empirical: One definition of empirical is, "Verifiable by observation or experience rather than theory or logic." When conducting self-inquiry, it's best to forego comparing your experience to any idealized experience or expectation. We're here to discover. So any description we've read or heard about what is supposed to happen when we self-inquire is useless. We're only interested in what we directly discover. If you're willing to take a strictly empirical approach, then only immediate, obvious, and self-explanatory experience matters. When you really get the spirit of this, it is quite a relief. How nice it is to not to have to stress over whether your experience is the "right" one. In a sense you're putting realization in the hot seat. You're saying, "OK, I trust that you really can show me something that is beyond my own capacity to construct as a mental image. I will keep my slate clean and not compare my experience to any ideal, regardless of where I acquired that ideal."

Fresh: - When you begin this inquiry just let go of everything you know. Let go of past inquiries and results. Let go of any insights you might have had, even the last time you meditated or engaged in inquiry. In fact, let go of what happened five minutes ago. Just this one question. Just this one experiential observation. Do this every time you return to inquiry. Better yet, do this as you go about inquiry. It's like writing on a chalkboard and there is an eraser immediately following the chalk. In this way every moment is fresh. Every time a question is asked, it's asked from

complete innocence and unknowing. We carry no baggage in this way. When we free ourselves up from the bondage of the past, we are free to synchronize with the moment to moment flow of reality.

Consistent: Initially, you might approach this inquiry during seated meditation, or when you feel inclined to introspect. Over time, as the curiosity and desire to wake up build, you will find that you can carry this inquiry with you for longer periods of time. You might be surprised as it becomes quite enjoyable to carry this throughout daily activities such as cooking, working, exercising, and even talking with others. With consistency a certain momentum builds. When I was close to awakening (though I didn't know it at the time), I would even carry inquiry off into sleep. I would try to stay with the query even as my consciousness seemed to disappear into nothingness. I would then pick it up just as soon as I remembered upon waking. There's no need to judge yourself if you can't stay with it constantly, but as your passion to penetrate the barrier of illusion grows, you will find that it can be carried with you a lot of the time. After all, if you've come this far you've realized there is nothing more important than this right?"

"https://diamondsutrazen.blogspot.com/2019/05/a-fan-in-winter-straw-dog.html

A Fan in Winter, A Straw Dog

"La nuit est profonde, les nuages évanouis, le ciel est pur.
Dans le monde entier, il n'y a pas une poussière pour gêner ma vision."

Like training, satori must be true. If one holds that there is something to practice and realize, one is a follower of the false religion of entity based on affirmation. If, on the other hand, one asserts that there is nothing to practice or realize, one is still not above the four types of differentiation and the one hundred forms of negation: one is an adherent of the equally false religion of nothingness, founded on negation. And this is the shadowy product of the dichotomous intellect, holding no truth.

First of all, I ask you to look upon the world's riches as a dunghill, upon the most beautiful men and women as stinking corpses, upon the highest honors and reputation as an echo, upon the most malicious calumny as the cawing of a crow.

Regard yourself as a fan in winter, the universe as a straw dog.

This accomplished, train wholeheartedly. Then, and then only, will you awaken. If you dare claim to have undergone real training and attained enlightenment without having gone through all this, you are nothing but a liar and are bound for hell. Bear all I have said in mind -- practice truly.

If you desire the attainment of satori, ask yourself this question: Who hears sound? As described in the Surangamasamadhi, that is Avalokitesvara's faith in the hearer. Since there is such a hearer in you, all of you hear sounds. You may say that it is the ear that hears, yet the ear is but a mechanism. If it could hear by itself, then the dead could hear our prayers for them. Inside you, then, is a hearer.

Now, this is the way to apply yourself: whether or not you hear anything, keep asking who the hearer is. Doubt, scrutinize, paying no attention to fancies or ideas. Strain every nerve without expecting anything to happen, without willing satori. Doubt, doubt, doubt. If even one idea arises, your doubt is not sufficiently strong, and you must question yourself more intensely. Scrutinize the hearer in yourself, who is beyond your power or vision.

Master Bassui says, "When at wits' end and unable to think another thought, you are applying yourself properly." Thus do not look around, but devote yourself utterly to doubting self-examination until you forget where you are or even that you live. This may lead you to feel completely at sea. Yet you must persist in the search for the hearer, sweating, like a dead man, until you are unconscious, a lump of great doubt. But look! That lump will suddenly break up and out of it will leap the angel of the awakening, the great satori consciousness. It is as if one awoke from the deepest dream, literally returned to life.

In Zen practice a variety of supernatural phenomena may be experienced. For example, you may see ghostly faces, demons, Buddhas, flowers, or you may feel your body becoming like that of a woman, or even purified into a state of non-existence. If this happens, your "doubt in practice" is still inadequate, for if in perfect doubt you will not have such illusions. Indeed it is only when you are not alert that you meet with them. Do not shrink from them, nor prize them. Just doubt and examine yourself all the more thoroughly.

Zen practitioners must accept the fact that while in meditation they are likely to suffer one or more of the three maladies: kon, san, and chin. Kon is sleepiness and san instability, both of which are too well known for comment. Chin, on the other hand, is a grave malady and always leads to unhappy results. It is a state in which one is free from sleepiness and instability, and all mentalization ceases. One feels gay, immaculate; one can go on in zazen for hours on end. One has a feeling that all things are equal, neither existent nor non-existent, right nor wrong. Those possessed by chin regard it as satori — a most dangerous delusion. If you were to remain in this state, you would go far astray. At such times, in fact, you must have the greatest doubt.

-Zen Master Manzan Dohaku”

“Nov 16 2017

Discourses of Master Po Shan

Po Shan (1575-1630)

When working at Zen, the important thing is to generate the i ching (doubt sensation). What is this doubt sensation? For instance: Where did I come from before my birth, and where shall I go after my death?

Since one does not know the answer to either question, a strong feeling of "doubt" arises in the mind. Stick this "doubt-mass" on to your forehead and keep it there all the time until you can neither drive it away nor put it down, even if you want to. Then suddenly you will discover that the doubt-mass has been crushed, that you have broken it into pieces. The masters of old said:

"The greater the doubt, the greater the awakening;

The smaller the doubt, the smaller the awakening;

No doubt, no awakening"

When working at Zen, the worst thing is to become attached to quietness, because this will unknowingly cause you to be engrossed in dead stillness. Then you will develop an inordinate fondness for quietness and at the same time an aversion for activity of any kind.

Once those who have lived amidst the noise and restlessness of worldly affairs experience the joy of quietness, they become captivated by its honey sweet taste, craving it like an exhausted traveler who seeks a peaceful den in which to slumber. How can people with such an attitude retain their awareness?

When working at Zen, one does not see the sky when lifting, nor the earth when lowering, one's head. A mountain is not a mountain, and water is not water. While walking or sitting one is not aware of doing so. Though among a hundred thousand people, no one is seen. Without and within the body and mind nothing exists but the burden of this doubt-sensation. This feeling can be described as "turning the whole world into a muddy vortex."

A Zen yogi should resolutely vow that he will never stop working until this doubt-mass is broken up. This is a most crucial point.

What does this "turning the whole world into a muddy vortex" mean? It refers to the great Truth, which from the time of no-beginning has existed latent and idle—it has never been brought forth. Therefore a Zen yogi should bestir himself to make the heavens spin and the earth and its waters roll; he will benefit greatly from the rolling surges and the tossing waves.

When working at Zen, one should not worry about not being able to revive after death; what should worry you is whether you can die out from the state of life! If you can really wrap yourself up tightly in i ching, the realm of movement will be vanquished naturally without making any specific effort to vanquish it, and distracted thoughts will be purified spontaneously without effort to purify them.

In a wholly natural way one will feel the six senses become spacious and vacuous. When one reaches this state, one will awaken to a mere touch and respond to the slightest call. Why then should one worry about not being able to revive?

When working in Zen, one should concentrate on one koan only, and not try to understand or explain them at all. Even if one were able to do so, this would be merely intellectual understanding and not true revelation. The Lotus Sutra says:

"This Dharma is not understood through thinking and intellection."

The Total Enlightenment Sutra declares:

"To perceive the Realm of Enlightenment of the Tathagata with the thinking mind is like attempting to burn Mount Sumeru with the light of a firefly; never will one succeed."

When working at Zen, one who works with absorption will feel as if they had lifted a thousand-pound load; and even if one wants to put it down, is unable to do so.

In ancient times people could enter the Dhyana while tilling the land, picking peaches or doing anything. It was never a matter of sitting idly for prolonged periods, engaged in forcefully suppressing one's thoughts. Does Dhyana mean stopping one's thoughts? If so, this is a debased Dhyana, not the Dhyana of Zen.

When working at Zen, the most harmful thing is to rationalize, conceptualize, or intellectualize the Tao with one's mind. One who does so will never reach Tao.

When working at Zen, one knows not whether they are walking or sitting. Nothing is present in the mind but the hua tou. Before breaking through the doubt-mass, one loses all sensation of body or mind, let alone such states as walking or sitting.

When working at Zen, one should not just await the coming of enlightenment with an expectant mind. This is like a traveler who sits idly by the road and expects his home to come to him. One will never arrive home this way. One must walk to get there. Likewise, when working at Zen, one never reaches enlightenment merely by waiting for it. One must press forward with all one's mind to get this enlightenment.

Attainment of the great enlightenment is like the sudden blossoming of the lotus flower or the sudden awakening of a dreamer. One cannot by waiting awaken from a dream, but one does so automatically when the time for sleep is over. Flowers cannot bloom by waiting but blossom of themselves when the time has come.

Likewise enlightenment is not so attained, but comes on its own when conditions are ripe. In other words, one should exert all one's strength to penetrate into the hua tou, pressing one's mind to the utmost in order to achieve realization.

Do not misunderstand what I have said and just wait for awakening to come. In the moment of awakening, the clouds vanish and the clear sky shines vast and empty; nothing can obscure it. In this moment heaven spins and the earth somersaults. An entirely different realm appears.

The masters of old said: "Tao, like the great Void, is all-inclusive. It lacks nothing and nothing remains in it."

One who has really attained the state of flexible hollowness sees no world without and no body or mind within. Only then can one be considered as having drawn near the entrance of Tao.

When working at Zen, one should know these four important points: To work on it with absolute detachment and complete freedom in a painstaking, direct, continuous, and flexible-hollow way.

Without directness exertion is completely wasted; and without exertion, directness is useless because it alone can never bring one to the entrance of Tao. Once the entrance is reached, however, one should maintain an uninterrupted continuity in order to attain a state conforming with enlightenment.. Once this state is achieved, one should strive to be flexible-hollow. Only then can one reach the state of wonder.

Po Shan (1575-1630)

Notes from the translator for this reading:

1. I ching is a very important Zen term meaning doubt-sensation or the feeling of doubt. The whole system of koan exercises is based upon the generation and then the break through of this "doubt-sensation." "Doubt" as used here, is not doubt in the ordinary sense of the word; it is, rather, a special type of doubt- a doubt without content-or, more succinctly, the pure sensation of doubt.

Sometimes Zen Buddhists also use the term "doubt-mass" to denote that this sensation is like a great mass or load weighing upon one's mind.

Though i ching in it original useage denotes the doubt brought about by koan exercise, Master Po Shan seems to have used it here in a much wider sense.

2.The six senses are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.

3. Hua tou (the essence of the sentence) Although both koan and hua tou may be used to denote the "inquiry exercise of Zen," the latter is original and more accurate. "Koan" implies the entire Zen story, including all the events, plus the main question at issue, and therefore is a general term, while "hua tou" is very specific. Hua tou denotes only the question, not the whole story, and in most cases only the gist, highlight, or essence, so to speak, of the question is implied. Hua tou also means before a word or thought and the ends or edges of a sentence.

Source:

The Practice of Zen

By: Chang Chen-Chi 1960

Elana

As sometimes happens in seeking the journal, what starts out as a fine piece causes some sense of pause giving rise to "hummm, something's missing here." And sometimes an earlier translator seems to have a more balanced presentation of the original teacher's heart/mind. And sometimes entire sections are omitted!

At any rate, here we have a reading that encourages us to raise this doubt mass. This term alone causes one to wonder what is this "doubt" they are talking about? Even exploring "what is it?" as a starting point is not a bad place to begin. All too often we think we understand a concept, but upon delving deeper we see ours is a superficial understanding at best.

Classical koan practice consisted of a teacher giving a historical koan to a student to work on. While these encounters from the past represent powerful break-throughs, they happened spontaneously, on the spot between a teacher capturing a moment to engender awakening. I have often wondered what someone else's koan could possibly do for later generations. And yet it is a part of Rinzai Zen that is still presently practiced.

Even if you don't have a teacher to give you a koan to "work on," life and our own questioning provide very potent material that causes us to stop and wonder. It enters koan quality when there is no easy answer to your question and you sit with it for years and years. Because it is so personal, it can haunt you and return as your spiritul theme.

Just because there is no easy answer or quick solution, though, is no reason to abandon your efforts or to trivialize your question. Your own questions have the most power if you can allow them to stay close. For each of us there is a burning question/ koan that is our own to lead us to enlightenment. Our biggest stumbling block is our tendency to fool ourselves and think we know more than we really do....we stop and congratulate ourselves too early in the process.

May our minds be clear!

Elana" - https://www.dailyzen.com/journal/discourses-of-master-po-shan

"Awakening the extremely intense desire for Freedom is the most important key in the book you are now reading... ...The extremely intense desire for the direct experience of the absolute Truth... ...The extremely intense desire to experience who or what you really are at your core and to live eternally as your true Self... ...When you drop all unnecessary activities every day and use all of the free time thus created to actually practice every day the most direct and rapid means to eternal bliss, you will know the extremely intense desire for Freedom has been awakened... ...If you turn your attention away from thought and towards awareness watching awareness and sustain that look for many hours every day, eventually the ego dream will end and the true Self will be experienced. Then all suffering ends and what remains is the eternal perfection of awareness-love-bliss." - Michael Langford, The Direct Means to Eternal Bliss

"ANNAMALAI SWAMI – FINAL TALKS

Annamalai Swami: Self-inquiry must be done continuously. It doesn't work if you regard it as a part-time activity. You may be doing something that doesn't hold your interest or attention, so you think, 'I will do some self-inquiry instead'. This is never going to work. You may go two steps forward when you practice, but you go five steps backward when you stop your practice and go back to your worldly affairs. You must have a lifelong commitment to establish yourself in the Self. Your determination to succeed must be strong and firm, and it should manifest as continuous, not part-time, effort.

For many lifetimes you have been immersed in ignorance. You are habituated to it. All your deeply rooted beliefs, all your patterns of behavior reinforce ignorance and strengthen the hold it has over you.
This ignorance is so strong, so deeply enmeshed in all your psychological structures, it takes a massive effort over a long period of time to break free from it. The habits and beliefs that sustain it have to be challenged again and again.

Ignorance is ignorance of the Self, and to remove it Self-awareness is required. When you come to an awareness of the Self, ignorance vanishes. If you don't lose contact with the Self, ignorance can never arise.

If there is darkness, you remove it by bringing light. Darkness is not something real and substantial that you have to dig out and throw away. It is just an absence of light, nothing more. When light is let into a dark room, the darkness is suddenly no longer there. It did not vanish gradually or go away piece by piece; it simply ceased to exist when the room became filled with light.

This is just an analogy because the Self is not like other lights. It is not an object that you either see or don't see. It is there all the time shining as your own reality. If you refuse to acknowledge its existence, if you refuse to believe that it is there, you put yourself in imaginary darkness. It is not a real darkness. It is just your own willful refusal to acknowledge that you are light itself. This self-inflicted ignorance is the darkness that has to be banished by the light of the Self within until we become one with it.

p. 18

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ATMA SWARUPA

The Heart, the birthplace of the ego, is the ground for the appearance, sustenance, and subsidence of the entire moving and unmoving universe. It (the Heart) therefore does not become a form in the way the ignorant believe. It is indeed the transcendental firmament (Paramakasa), the shining of pure being that is complete and full.
Guru Vachaka Kovai v. 257

The mind that has died in one's Heart, the ocean of jnana-swarupa, is eternal silence [mauna]. The transcendental expanse, the true Heart, the rapturous sea of bliss supreme, is one's true 'I' [aham], which is replete with love.
Guru Vachaka Kovai v. 258

The Heart alone, true bliss, which exists and shines without thinking any thought, is 'Annamalai, my Self'. It is impossible for you to measure with your mind that which abides as the unbroken absolute fullness, which has nothing else existing apart from it.
Guru Vachaka Kovai v. 259

257. Heart, the Source, is the beginning, the middle, and the end of all. Heart, the Supreme Space, is never a form, It is the Light of Truth.

258. The death of the mind drowned in the Ocean of Self-Consciousness is the eternal Silence. The real 'I' is the Supreme Heart-Space which is the great Ocean of Bliss.

259. You [the mind] cannot cognize Self, which is the perfect unbroken Existence and the One without a second. The Heart, Sat-Chit-Ananda, which is the same thought-free Self, is Annamalai.

Since, through the inquiry 'Who am I?' the ego is destroyed in those who have known and reached the Heart that is the source of the rising ego, the dualistic pairs of opposing thoughts that exist depending on the ego, which together comprise the notion of bondage, are also totally destroyed. [Within such people] the darkness of ignorance that was the basis of the ego is also annihilated and they become the swarupa, the Supreme Self, the Heart that is eternally free of defilement. As they have attained the surging of the true and supreme bliss within themselves, at that very moment they are freed from the sorrow of birth.
Guru Vachaka Kovai v. 260

Muruganar: As the Heart is the Supreme, and as those who reach it become it, it has been said, 'Those who have known and reached the Heart...become the swarupa, the Supreme Self'.
'The dualistic pairs of opposing thoughts' refers to vikshepa [the restlessness of the mind and the multiplicity it produces].
The collection of ancient vasanas that resides in the Heart orifice as the source of vikshepa is referred to as 'the notion of bondage'. Since vasanas themselves evolve as thoughts, the notion of bondage is equated with the dualistic pairs of opposing thoughts.
When one has experienced the cutting of the Heart-knot, one knows and reaches the Heart. As Ulladu Narpadu Anubhandham, verse 19, declares, the darkness of avidya [ignorance] and the collection of vasanas remain in the orifice of the Heart. As soon as the knot is cut, the Heart that remained in the orifice of the Heart. As soon as the knot is cut, the Heart that remained closed like a lotus bud, blossoms, annihilating vasanas and avidya completely, and shines as the light of being, the exalted expanse. This is the state of absolute liberation.

Because it shines, without diminution, as supreme bliss, it has been said, 'They have attained the surging of the true and supreme bliss within themselves.'

Because there is no room in that place for the sorrow of birth that arises through ignorance, it has been said, 'They are freed from the sorrow of birth'.

Dualistic pairs of opposing thoughts refer to joy and misery, darkness and light, and so on. They arise in one's mind through the ancient collection of vasanas and are the cause of one's sorrow. If the vasanas die and the pairs of thoughts cease, then misery also ceases. What exists then is the ocean of bliss. It has therefore been said that those who are freed from the thought-pairs experience the surging of supreme bliss.

While that [Heart] abides, pervading both within and without, it exists neither within nor without. The body that appears as the source for the distinction of 'within and without' is itself a concept of the thinking mind.
Guru Vachaka Kovai v. 261

Although the body exists in the Self, the ignorant man, who is bound by anava [ego] thinks that the Self exists within the body. This is like someone who believes that the screen, the abiding fundamental substratum, is present within one of the many shadowy picture-[people] who appear on the screen.
Guru Vachaka Kovai v. 262

Bhagavan : The body exists within the Self, but he who thinks he exists inside the insentient body is like someone who regards the screen, the base for the [projected] pictures, as being within one of those pictures.

Muruganar: Believing that the base for all the other [cinema] pictures is within one of the pictures is an erroneous perspective. Similarly, through ajnana, a person thinks he is within the body, whereas his body is actually in the Self, like any other perceived object.

Therefore, only those mighty ones [jnanis] who have experienced the complete annihilation of the ego that assumes the form of the body will attain eminence, having known its [the Heart's] omnipresence through a subtle intelligence [buddhi] whose veiling has been completely cleared.
Guru Vachaka Kovai v. 263

- Quotes taken from Ramana Hridayam | Facebook"

"BASSUI'S FIRST LETTER TO THE ZEN PRIEST IGUCHI

I have read your presentations at length, but it misses the point of the koan. The Sixth Patriarch said: 'The flag doesn't move, the wind doesn't move, only your mind moves.' To realize this clearly is to perceive that the universe and yourself are of the same root, that you and every single thing are a unity. The gurgle of the stream and the sigh of the wind are the voices of the master. The green of pine, the white of snow, these are the colors of the master, the very one who lifts the hands, moves the legs, sees, hears. One who grasps this directly without recourse to reason or intellection can be said to have some degree of inner realization- But this is not yet full enlightenment.

An ancient Zen master [Rinzai] said: "You should not cling to the idea that you are Pure-essence." And again: "Your physical body, composed of the four basic elements, can't hear or understand this preaching. The empty-space can't understand this preaching. Then what is it that hears and understands?" Meditate fully and directly on these words. Take hold of this koan as though wielding the jewel-sword of the Vajra king. Cut down whatever appears in the mind.

When thoughts of mundane matters arise, cut them off. When notions of Buddhism arise, likewise lop them off. In short, destroy all ideas, whether of realization, of Buddhas, or of devils, and all day long pursue the question "What is it that hears this preaching?"

When you have eradicated every conception until only emptiness remains, and then cut through even the emptiness, your mind will burst open and that which hears will manifest itself. Persevere, persevere-never quit halfway-until you reach the point where you feel as though you have risen from the dead. Only then will you be able to wholly resolve the momentous question "What is it that hears this preaching?"

I am afraid it may be inconvenient for you to write me often, so I am writing you this [kind of detailed] letter. After you have read it drop it into the fire.

- Bassui Tokusho in 'The Three Pillars of Zen'"

BASSUI'S SECOND LETTER TO THE ZEN PRIEST IGUCHI

I have read your letter carefully. Having long admired you for your determination to come to Self-realization. I was highly gratified to learn that you have not forgotten the great question. Your answer has been noted in all respects.

Here I want to tell you to make this your koan: "What is the substance of my fundamental nature?" In your search for the master that hears and speaks, though thousands of thoughts arise don't entertain them but only ask "What is it?" Every thought and all self-awareness will then disappear, followed by a state, not unlike a cloudless sky.

Now, mind itself has no form. What is it, then, that hears and works and moves about? Delve into yourself deeper and deeper until you are no longer aware of a single object. Then beyond a shadow of a doubt, you will perceive your True-nature, like a man awakening from a dream. Assuredly at that moment, flowers will bloom on withered trees, and fire flame up from ice. All of Buddhism, all worldly concern, all notion of good and evil, will have disappeared like last night's dream, and your fundamental Buddha-nature alone will manifest itself.

Having come to such an inner understanding, you must not then cherish the notion that this Mind is fundamentally Buddha-nature. If you do you will be creating for yourself another thought-form.

Only because I regard your desire for Self-realization so highly do I write in such detail. Thank you for sending the five hundred packets of caked rice and the pound of tea.

- The Three Pillars of Zen

BASSUI'S LETTER TO LORD NAKAMURA - GOVERNOR OF AKI PROVINCE

You ask me how to practice Zen with reference to this phrase from a sutra: "Mind, having no fixed abode, should flow forth." There is no express method for attaining enlightenment. If you but look into your Self-nature directly, not allowing yourself to be deflected, the Mind flower will come into bloom. Hence the sutra says: "Mind, having no fixed abode, should flow forth." Thousands of words spoken directly by Buddhas and Patriarchs add up to this one phrase. Mind is the True-nature of things, transcending all forms. The True-nature is the Way. The Way is Buddha. Buddha is Mind. Mind is not within or without or in between. It is not being or nothingness or non-being or non-nothingness or Buddha or mind or matter. So it is called the abodeless Mind. This Mind sees colors with the eyes, hears sounds with the ears. Look for this master directly!

A Zen master [Rinzai] of old says: "One's body, composed of the four primal elements can't hear or understand this preaching. The spleen or stomach or liver or gall bladder can't hear or understand this preaching. Empty-space can't understand it. Then what does hear and understand?" Strive to perceive directly. If your mind remains attached to any form or feeling whatsoever, or is affected by logical reasoning or conceptual thinking, you are as far from true realization as heaven is from earth.

How can you cut off at a stroke the sufferings of birth-and-death? As soon as you consider how to advance, you get lost in reasoning; but if you quit you are adverse to the highest path. To be able neither to advance nor to quit is to be a "breathing corpse." If in spite of this dilemma you empty your mind of all thoughts and push on with your zazen, you are bound to enlighten yourself and apprehend the phrase "Mind, having no fixed abode, should flow forth." Instantly you will grasp the sense of all Zen dialogue a well the profound and subtle meaning of the countless sutras.

The layman Ho asked Baso: "What is it that transcends everything in the universe?" Baso answered: ' I will tell you after you have drunk up the waters of the West River in one gulp.' Ho instantly became deeply enlightened. See here, what does this mean? Does it explain the phrase "Mind, having no fixed abode, should flow forth," or does it point to the very one reading this? If you still don't comprehend, go back to questioning, "What is hearing now?" Find out this very

moment! The problem of birth-and-death is momentous, and the world moves fast. Make the most of time, for it waits for no one.

Your own Mind is intrinsically Buddha. Buddhas are those who have realized this. Those who haven't are the so-called ordinary sentiant beings. Sleeping and working, standing and sitting, ask yourself "What is my own Mind?" looking into the source from which your thoughts arise. What is this subject that right now perceives, thinks, moves, works, goes forth, or returns? To know it you must intensely absorb yourself in the question. But even though you do not realize it in this life, beyond a doubt you will in the next because of your present efforts.

In your zazen think in terms of neither good nor evil. Don't try to stop thoughts from arising, only ask yourself; 'What is my own Mind?" Now, even when your questioning goes deeper and deeper you will get no answer until finally you will reach a cul-de-sac, your thinking totally checked. You won't find anything within that can be called "I" or "Mind." But who is it that understands all this? Continue to probe more deeply yet and the mind that perceives there is nothing will vanish; you will no longer be aware of questioning but only of emptiness. When awareness of even emptiness disappears, you will realise there is no Buddha outside Mind and no Mind outside Buddha. Now for the first time you will discover that when you do not hear with your ears you are truly hearing, and when you do not see with your eyes you are really seeing Buddhas of the past, present, and future. But don't cling to any of this, just experience it for yourself!

See here, what is your own Mind? Everyone's Original-nature is not less than Buddha. But since men doubt this and search for Buddha and Truth outside their Mind, they fail to attain enlightenment, being helplessly driven within cycles of birth-and-death, entangled in karma both good and bad. The source of all karma bondage is delusion i.e. the thoughts, feelings, and perceptions (stemming from ignorance). Rid yourself of them and you are emancipated. Just as ash covering a charcoal fire is dispersed when the fire is fanned, so these delusions vanish once you realize your Self-nature.

During zazen neither loathe nor be charmed by any of your thoughts. With your mind turned inward, look steadily into their source and the delusive feelings and perceptions in which they are rooted will evaporate. This is not yet Self realization, however, even though your mind becomes bright and empty like the sky, you have awareness of neither inner nor outer, and all the ten quarters seem clear and luminous. To take this for realization is to mistake a mirage for reality. Now even more intensely search this mind of yours which hears. Your physical body, composed of the four basic elements, is like a phantom, without reality, yet apart from this body there is no mind. The empty-space of ten quarters can neither see nor hear; still, something within you does hear and distinguish sounds,

Who or what is it?

When this question totally ignites you, distinctions of good and evil, awareness of being or emptiness, vanish like a light extinguished on a dark night. Though you are no longer consciously aware of yourself, still you can hear and know you exist. Try as you will to discover the subject hearing, your efforts will fail and you will find yourself at an impasse. All at once your mind will burst into great enlightenment and you will feel as though you have risen from the dead, laughing loudly and clapping your hands in delight. Now for the first time you will know that Mind itself is Buddha.

Were someone to ask, "What does one's Buddha-mind look like?' I would answer: "In the tree fish play, in the deep sea bird are flying." What does this mean? If you don't understand it, look into your own Mind and ask yourself: "What is he, this master who sees and hears?"

Make the most of time: it waits for no one!

- The Three Pillars of Zen

“c. Venerable Ones, get to know the one who plays with these configurations. He is the original source of all the Buddhas. Knowing him, wherever you are is home. Your physical body, formed by the four elements, cannot understand the Dharma you are listening to; nor can your spleen, stomach, liver or gall; nor can the empty space.

Who then can understand the Dharma and can listen to it? The one here before your very eyes, brilliantly clear and shining without any form — there he is who can understand the Dharma you are listening to.

If you can really grasp this, you are not different from the Buddhas and patriarchs. Ceaselessly he is right here, conspicuously present.28”

- Ch’an Master Linji (Zen Master Rinzai)

“Inquiry: “Who?”

When in the introduction we examined what is meant by the word kensho, I said that deep inquiry into the nature of one’s own existence is itself an important method of Zen practice. “What is the nature of this mind that experiences?” “Who is it that carries this body around?” “Who or what am I?” These are expressions of fundamental and essential human questions, not at all limited to Zen.

Certainly, inquiring into these questions in any manner is a worthy undertaking. But it should be made clear that such inquiry becomes Zen practice only when it is done in the yogic manner encompassing one’s whole body-mind. Unifying the body, mind, breath, and subtle energetic system, and making use of concentrated samadhi power to then enter with one’s entire being into these questions—becoming one with them and so penetrating them to their core—is the only way we could be justified in calling our inquiry Zen practice.

Inquiry done like this in an integrated state, with great energetic effort and commitment, immediately confirms something important: we could never arrive at acceptable answers to our pressing existential questions through intellectual analysis and learned knowledge alone. Nothing that we could read, think, contemplate, or conceive will lead us by itself to a truly satisfying resolution. Only answers that explode forth from the deepest totality of one’s integrated being can satisfy and liberate. Whatever outward forms our path of Zen practice may take, the essential inner point of all practice is like this. Here we may indeed glimpse the footsteps of all the great masters before us, regardless of tradition.

Naturally, Zen preserves many explicit instructions for accomplishing this that we may receive from a qualified teacher. In part two we will revisit this kind of practice, exploring how the methods of internal energetic cultivation inform such an embodied way of working with wato and koan.

But with all that said, I think it not harmful for beginners to take up a general practice of inquiry. In its essence, such inquiry is really another way of turning around the light of our awareness such that we fixate less on perceived objects and instead begin to see at the source of seeing, hear at the source of hearing, and trace back thoughts to the source of thinking. For our purposes here I will thus give simple instructions that could be sufficient for beginners to temporarily use on their own, until they are able to find a teacher.

1. The essential point of this method is to release one's usual rigid fixation on outer circumstances and just look with great energy into the source of all one's experiences. This is to be done within whatever activity one is doing. When you eat, for example, focus completely on the act of eating, bringing your attention to the sensations and tastes, attending to them with your whole body-mind. But as you do this, give rise to a simple thought—or more accurately, a feeling—of inquiry: Who is eating? Who or what is it that is experiencing this? Who is tasting the food?

2. When you are walking about, spread your vision out and attend to the act of walking. Inhabit it with your whole body-mind and enter the samadhi of that activity. While doing so, give rise to the simple inquiry again and again with great energy: Who is walking?

3. All activities are like this. As you throw yourself into your daily work, sparing nothing of your attention and fully engaging your entire body and senses to completely "taste" the situations you encounter, inquire constantly in the background and observe with a feeling of wishing fervently to know: Who is doing this? Who (or what) is it? What is this?

4. In the beginning you will find that you often forget to set up this mind of inquiry. It is easy to be taken up by the wonderful taste of the food, the sights that meet the eye (or the thoughts that arise) while walking, the stressful situations of work, and so on. But just keep reminding yourself to observe and ask: Who is this? Who am I? What is this thing that is experiencing, seeing, hearing, eating, working, shitting, sleeping, growing old? If you like, you could even hang up the single word "Who?" or the words "What is this?" someplace like your desk at work. Seeing them repeatedly, you may be reminded to look closely at your life while engaged within the midst of it.

If you practice inquiring into your daily affairs like this, you may begin from time to time to have a strange feeling. It is something like glancing at a word on a page or at one's own outstretched hand: normally a feeling of familiar recognition arises. But if we look intently at one of these things long enough, our habitual recognition—that is, the conceptual fabrication we make and project onto the sight of these things—falls somewhat away. A word then suddenly looks odd and foreign, a collection of lines and shapes rather than something with meaning. A hand suddenly looks strange and unrecognizable, as wondrous and odd as the appendage of any alien creature in a science fiction movie. Practicing inquiry of the kind I have described, we will start to have moments when our whole existence and being suddenly seem foreign, unrecognizable, and alien in such a way. We will realize that we really have no idea at all what this strange existence is, and we actually haven't the slightest clue who or what this one who experiences, lives, and dies actually is.

In such a way we can enter the "great doubt"* often spoken of in Zen. And it is crucial to do so, because it is just this fundamental, pressing, existential inquiry that will drive our Zen practice most quickly to fruition. Stepping out from the illusory, projected world of fantasy within which most people unknowingly live, we must come to see clearly that there is nothing we know for certain at all. It is an odd but quite good place at which to arrive, this state of utter nonknowing. It is a state pregnant with the possibility of wisdom.

To sum up this method most simply, the following words from Torei Enji—the great master who helped refine the koan method of practice used in Rinzai Zen today—are incredibly useful. Taking Torei at his word, putting these simple instructions into practice and engaging the entire body-mind as best we can, there is no doubt that we will draw closer to the gate of kensho.

Look at what is, at who sees, hears, walks, sits—now, here! With all your heart, look at everything. Without giving rise in the heart to [concepts of] being and not being, to yes and no, without discrimination and without reasoning, just look! When the time is ripe, it will appear of itself, requiring neither knowledge nor discrimination.24"

- Excerpt from Meido Moore's Hidden Zen book (chapter 2)

Zen Master Dogen:

http://www.oceanmoon.org/zen.html
Consider the Buddha: although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of upright sittingcan yet be seen. As for Bodhidharma, although he had received the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still. If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice?
Therefore, put aside the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing phrases, and learn to take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will manifest. If you want to realize such, get to work on such right now.

"21th June 2010

Thank a lot!

Your self-inquiry instruction is almost like a hint. It is rather hard for low-intelligent people like to comprehend and follow. :) RM and Adya also gave out instructions like yours. Could you give a couple of examples and describe the detailed steps you do self-inquiry from the beginning to the end?

For example,

Hear a bird chirping

Who hear that?

It is me.

No.

.....

Hi,

Steps are not necessary in self inquiry, because this method is meant to cut through all steps, thought-inference-process, conceptualizations, to directly awaken to your True Self. This is why Koan and Zen is known as the method and school of Sudden or Instantaneous Awakening, not gradual or step-by-step awakening. This is the Direct Path.

For example,

Hear a bird chirping.

What/who is hearing?

(silence)

Silence means you aren't trying to answer the question using your mind (because the answer cannot be found there - the more you try to figure out with your mind the more time is wasted because you are looking at the wrong direction), but instead you are directly looking at 'What Hears' and experiencing your True Self, your Hearing-Nature/Pure Awareness. The inner cognizer (I AM) turns within and cognizes itself, its true nature.

The pure silence underneath the sound is your true nature, but it is not an inert nothingness, in fact not even silence as such, but more accurately a featureless wide-awake space which perceives all sounds, all sights, all thoughts, etc. It cannot be understood by the mind. You have to trace the hearing, the radiance, the seeing, to its Source.

If you truly and successfully traced all perceptions to its Source, you will realize and experience a Certainty of Being, an undeniability of your very Consciousness which is formless and intangible but at the same time a most solid self-evident fact of your being.

However if during the process of self-inquiry a thought arise like "could this be it, what is Awareness, etc", just ignore the thought, don't attempt to answer them using the mind/logic, but continue turning the light around, asking "Who am I" or "Who is aware of the thought?" and so on. Turn away from all doubts to the Doubtless Certainty/Undeniability of Being/Consciousness, and all your doubts and questions are resolved in an instant.

As Jason Swason said:

"By turning the attention to the mind, immediately there are doubts. More thoughts rush in to question the questions, confirm or contradict other thoughts. A maddening cycle...

Notice when thoughts are paused there are no doubts; the certainty of (doubtless) Being is obviously present; the unquestionable FACT of EXISTENCE. Notice that the Being is ALWAYS presently shining, effortlessly and spontaneously. Stay with that undeniable non-conceptual confidence. Your Being has always been present for every single experience. That natural cognition in which all experiences arise is not a person.

Be as you ARE and not what you imagine yourself to be."

And as Ramana Maharshi instructed:

"If other thoughts arise, one should, without attempting to complete them, enquire, 'To whom did they occur?' What does it matter if ever so many thoughts arise? At the very moment that each thought rises, if one vigilantly enquires 'To whom did

this appear?' it will be known 'To me'. If one then enquires 'Who am I?' the mind will turn back to its source and the thought that had arisen will also subside. By repeatedly practising in this way, the mind will increasingly acquire the power to abide at its source. When the mind, which is subtle, is externalised via the brain and the sense organs, names and forms, which are material, appear. When it abides in the Heart, names and forms disappear. Keeping the mind in the Heart, not allowing it to go out, is called 'facing the Self' or 'facing inwards'. Allowing it to go out from the Heart is termed 'facing outwards' When the mind abides in the Heart in this way, the 'I', the root of all thoughts, [vanishes]. Having vanished, the ever-existing Self alone will shine. The state where not even the slightest trace of the thought 'I' remains is alone swarupa [one's real nature]. This alone is called mauna [silence]. Being still in this way can alone be called jnana drishti [seeing through true knowledge]. Making the mind subside into the Self is 'being still'. On the other hand, knowing the thoughts of others, knowing the three times [past present and future] and knowing events in distant places - these can never be jnana drishti."

Don't try to comprehend the process intellectually. Don't stop at any thought-conclusion, like "to me" (which is simply an inferred thought), but trace all thoughts and perceptions to its source by asking "Who am I?" to discover your True Self. Spending more time trying to figure out how this works in the mind is just going to prevent you from directly realizing and experiencing your True Mind. The purpose is to trace the radiance back to the source, then abide at the Source as Ramana Maharshi said. This is what I warned you earlier (as I know you will have such doubts and questions which I myself did earlier on):

http://buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/390582?page=4#post_9849278

Nevertheless, the method is indeed important to give rise to realization. Any method that leads to realization must be **direct** *- means it must be a means that makes a practitioner bypass all the mind's conceptualizations and inference processes which are all indirect and secondary (which is not a direct realization and experience of your true essence and hence leaves doubts), so that you can touch directly and with certainty the essence of your Being without intermediary.* **On hindsight there was a period when I first started practicing self-inquiry where I was still intellectualizing about this, <u>like how should I practice self inquiry, what does asking 'Before birth Who am I' mean and leads to, etc, which are all sidetracks and distractions because it is still using the mind and indirect inference and hence not a 'direct' approach to realize the essence of Being.</u>**

So do beware of intellectualizing these things, because it will not lead to Self-Realization - only the direct approach to investigate and look (a non-conceptual exploration) into the essence of Self leads to realization.

Don't worry about doing it the wrong way, if you keep asking 'Who am I?' and turn the light around to its Source instead of intellectualizing it or following the mind, you are certainly on the right path.

Anyway I don't know if you read this before, you probably did, but anyway here's a good article by Ken Wilber:

"There are many things that I can doubt, but I cannot doubt my own consciousness in this moment. My consciousness IS, and even if I tried to doubt it, it would be my consciousness doubting. I can imagine that my senses are being presented with a fake reality – say, a completely virtual reality or digital reality, which looks real but is merely a series of extremely realist images. But even then, I cannot doubt the consciousness that is doing the watching...

The very undeniability of my present awareness, the undeniability of my consciousness, immediately delivers to me a certainty of existence in this moment, a certainty of Being in the now-ness of this moment. I cannot doubt consciousness and Being in this moment, for it is the ground of all knowing, all seeing, all existing...

Who am I? Ask that question over and over again, deeply. Who am I? What is it in me that is conscious of everything?

If you think that you know Spirit, or if you think you don't, Spirit is actually that which is thinking both of those thoughts. So you can doubt the objects of consciousness, but you can never believably doubt the doubter, never really doubt the Witness of the entire display. Therefore, rest in the Witness, whether it is thinking that it knows God or not, and that witnessing, that undeniable immediacy of now-consciousness, is itself God, Spirit, Buddha-mind. The certainty lies in the pure self-felt Consciousness to which objects appear, not in the objects themselves. You will never, never, never see God, because God is the Seer, not any finite, mortal, bounded object that can be seen...

This pure I AM state is not hard to achieve but impossible to escape, because it is ever present and can never really be doubted. You can never run from Spirit, because Spirit is the Runner. To put it very bluntly, Spirit is not hard to find but impossible to avoid: it is that which is looking at this page right now. Can't you feel That One? Why on earth do you keep looking for God when God is actually the Looker?

Simply ask, Who am I? Who am I? Who am I?

I am aware of my feelings, so I am not my feelings – Who am I? I am aware of my thoughts, so I am not my thoughts – Who am I? Clouds float by in the sky, thoughts float by in the mind, feelings float by in the body – and I am none of those because I can Witness them all.

Moreover, I can doubt that clouds exist, I can doubt that feelings exist, I can doubt that objects of thought exist – but I cannot doubt that the Witness exists in this moment, because the Witness would still be there to witness the doubt.

I am not objects in nature, not feelings in the body, not thoughts in the mind, for I can Witness them all. I am that Witness – a vast, spacious, empty, clear, pure, transparent Openness that impartially notices all that arises, as a mirror spontaneously reflects all its objects...

You can already feel some of this Great Liberation in that, as you rest in the ease of witnessing this moment, you already feel that you are free from the suffocating constriction of mere objects, mere feelings, mere thoughts – they all come and go, but you are that vast, free, empty, open Witness of them all, untouched by their torments and tortures.

This is actually the profound discovery of... the pure divine Self, the formless Witness, causal nothingness, the vast Emptiness in which the entire world arises, stays a bit, and passes. And you are That. You are not the body, not the ego, not nature, not thoughts, not this, not that – you are a vast Emptiness, Freedom, Release, and Liberation.

With this discovery... you are halfway home. You have disidentified from any and all finite objects; you rest as infinite Consciousness. You are free, open, empty, clear, radiant, released, liberated, exalted, drenched in a blissful emptiness that exists prior to space, prior to time, prior to tears and terror, prior to pain and mortality and suffering and death. You have found the great Unborn, the vast Abyss, the unqualifiable Ground of all that is, and all that was, and all that ever shall be.

But why is that only halfway home? Because as you rest in the infinite ease of consciousness, spontaneously aware of all that is arising, there will soon enough come the great catastrophe of Freedom and Fullness: the Witness itself will disappear entirely, and instead of witnessing the sky, you are the sky; instead of touching the earth, you are the earth; instead of hearing the thunder, you are the thunder. You and the entire Kosmos because One Taste – you can drink the Pacific Ocean in a single gulp, hold Mt. Everest in the palm of your hand; supernovas swirl in your heart and the solar system replaces your head...

You are One Taste, the empty mirror that is one with any and all objects that arise in its embrace, a mindlessly vast translucent expanse: infinite, eternal, radiant beyond release. And you... are... That...

So the primary Cartesian dualism – which is simply the dualism between... in here and out there, subject and object, the empty Witness and all things witnessed – is finally undone and overcome in nondual One Taste. Once you actually and fully contact the Witness, then – and only then – can it be transcended into radical Nonduality, and halfway home becomes fully home, here in the ever-present wonder of what is...

And so how do you know that you have finally and really overcome the Cartesian dualism? Very simple: if you really overcome the Cartesian dualism, then you no longer feel that you are on this side of your face looking at the world out there. There is only the world, and you are all of that; you actually feel that you are one with everything that is arising moment to moment. You are not merely on this side of your face looking out there. "In here" and "out there" have become One Taste with a shuddering obviousness and certainty so profound it feels like a five-ton rock just dropped on your head. It is, shall we say, a feeling hard to miss.

At that point, which is actually your ever-present condition, there is no exclusive identity with this particular organism, no constriction of consciousness to the head, a constriction that makes it seem that "you" are in the head looking at the rest of the world out there; there is no binding of attention to the personal bodymind: instead, consciousness is one with all that is arising – a vast, open, transparent, radiant, infinitely Free and infinitely Full expanse that embraces the entire Kosmos, so that every single subject and every single object are erotically united in the Great Embrace of One Taste. You disappear from merely being behind your eyes, and you become the All, you directly and actually feel that your basic identity is everything that is arising moment to moment (just as previously you felt that your identity was with this finite, partial, separate, mortal coil of flesh you call a body). Inside and outside have become One Taste. I tell you, it can happen just like that!"

(Source: Boomeritis, Sidebar E: "The Genius Descartes Gets a Postmodern Drubbing: Integral Historiography in a Postmodern Age". More to be found in The Simple Feeling of Being, a collection of Ken Wilber's inspirational, mystical and instructional passages drawn from his publications, based on his experiences.)

Regards

AEN

21th June 2010

Previously:

p.s. "If a teacher cannot awaken you in his first meeting with

you, this means that either he is not a real teacher, or that you

yourself are spiritually immature." by Anadi

etc etc

Hi,

Just flipped to a few random pages in 'I Am That' by Nisargadatta, and found something relevant to what I was discussing earlier, so I'm sharing with you.

.....

Q: Ups and downs in *sadhana* are inevitable. Yet the earnest seeker plods on in spite of all. What can the *gnani* do for such a seeker?

M: If the seeker is earnest, the light can be given. The light is for all and always there, but the seekers are few, and among those few, those who are ready are very rare. Ripeness of heart and mind is indispensable.

Q: Did you get your own realisation through effort or by the grace of your Guru?

M: His was the teaching and mine was the trust. My confidence in him made me accept his words as true, go deep into them, live them, and that is how I came to realise what I am. The Guru's person and words made me trust him and my trust made them fruitful.

Q: But can a Guru give realisation without words, without trust, just like this, without any preparation?

M: Yes, one can, but where is the taker? You see, I was so attuned to my Guru, so completely trusting him, there was so little of resistance in me, that it all happened easily and quickly. But not everybody is so fortunate. Laziness and restlessness often stand in the way and until they are seen and removed, the progress is slow. All those who have realised on the spot, by mere touch, look or thought have been ripe for it. But such are very few. The majority needs some time for ripening. *Sadhana* is accelerated ripening.

Q: What makes one ripe? What is the ripening factor?

M: Earnestness of course, one must be really anxious. After all, the realised man is the most earnest man. Whatever he does, he does it completely, without limitations and reservations. Integrity will take you to reality.

.....

Q: In the beginning we may have to pray and meditate for some time before we are ready for self-inquiry.

M: If you believe so, go on. To me, all delay is a waste of time. You can skip all the preparation and go directly for the ultimate search within. Of all the Yogas it is the simplest and the shortest.

.....

M: The seeker is he who is in search of himself.

Give up all questions except one: 'Who am I?' After all, the only fact you are sure of is that you are. The 'I am' is certain. The 'I am this' is not. Struggle to find out what you are in reality.

To know what you are, you must first investigate and know what you are not.

Discover all that you are not - body, feelings, thoughts, time, space, this or that - nothing, concrete or abstract, which you perceive can be you. The very act of perceiving shows that you are not what you perceive.

The clearer you understand that on the level of mind you can be described in negative terms only, the quicker will you come to the end of your search and realize that you are the limitless being." - Soh's E-Journal entries in 2010 https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/12/my-e-booke-journal.html

Ch'an/Zen master Xu Yun said:

"There are many hua t'ous, such as: 'All things are returnable to One, to what is (that) One returnable?' 1 'Before you were born, what was your real face?'2 but the hua t'ou: 'Who is repeating Buddha's name?' is widely in use (today).

What is hua t'ou? (lit. word-head). Word is the spoken word and head is that which precedes word. For instance, when one says 'Amitabha Buddha', this is a word. Before it is said it is a hua t'ou (or ante-word). That which is called a hua t'ou is the moment before a thought arises. As soon as a thought arises, it becomes a hua wei (lit. word-tail). The moment before a thought arises is called 'the un-born'. That void which is neither disturbed nor dull, and neither still nor (one-sided) is called 'the unending'. The unremitting turning of the light inwards on oneself, instant after instant, and exclusive of all other things, is called 'looking into the hua t'ou' or 'taking care of the hua t'ou'.

When one looks into a hua t'ou, the most important thing is to give rise to a doubt. Doubt is the crutch of hua t'ou.3 For instance, when one is asked: 'Who is repeating Buddha's name?' everybody knows that he himself repeats it, but is it repeated by the mouth or by the mind? If the mouth repeats it, why does not it do so when one sleeps? If the mind repeats it, what does the mind look like? As mind is intangible, one is not clear about it. Consequently some slight feeling of doubt arises about 'WHO'. This doubt should not be coarse; the finer it is, the better. At all times and in all places, this doubt alone should be looked into unremittingly, like an ever-flowing stream, without giving rise to a second thought. If this doubt persists, do not try to shake it; if it ceases to exist, one should gently give rise to it again. Beginners will find the hua t'ou more effective in some still place than amidst disturbance. However, one should not give rise to a discriminating mind; one should remain

indifferent to either the effectiveness or ineffectiveness (of the hua t'ou) and one should take no notice of either stillness or disturbance. Thus, one should work at the training with singleness of mind.

(In the hua t'ou): 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?' emphasis should be laid upon the word 'Who', the other words serving only to give a general idea of the whole sentence. For instance (in the questions): 'Who is wearing this robe and eating rice?', 'Who is going to stool and is urinating?', 'Who is putting an end to ignorance?', and 'Who is able to know and feel?', as soon as one lays emphasis upon (the word) 'Who', while one is walking or standing, sitting or reclining, one will be able to give rise to a doubt without difficulty and without having to use one's faculty of thought to think and discriminate. Consequently the word 'Who' of the hua t'ou is a wonderful technique in Ch'an training. However, one should not repeat the word 'Who' or the sentence 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?' like (adherents of the Pure Land School) who repeat the Buddha's name. Neither should one set one's thinking and discriminating mind on searching for him who repeats the Buddha's name. There are some people who unremittingly repeat the sentence: 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?'; it would be far better merely to repeat Amitabha Buddha's name (as do followers of the Pure Land School) for this will give greater merits. There are others who indulge in thinking of a lot of things and seek after everything here and there, and call this the rising of a doubt; they do not know that the more they think, the more their false thinking will increase, just like someone who wants to ascend but is really descending. You should know all this." - https://buddhismnow.com/2009/12/22/hua-tou/

"Our questions become more and more subtle and soon begin to obsess us. Who am I? How do I know who I am? These questions go round and round in our minds like tired and angry boxers. Sometimes, we may want to quit thinking about the Hua Tou, but we find we can't get it out of our mind. The bell won't ring and let us rest. If you don't like pugilistic metaphors you could say that the Hua Tou begins to haunt us like a melody that we just can't stop humming.

So there we are - always challenged, always sparring. Needless to say, a Hua Tou should never degenerate into an empty expression. Many people think they can shadowbox with their Hua Tou and just go through the motions of engagement. While their minds are elsewhere, their lips say, "Who is repeating the Buddha's name? Who is repeating the Buddha's name? Who is repeating the Buddha's name?" This is the way of feisty parrots, not of Chan practitioners.

The Hua Tou has meaning. It is a question that has an answer and we must be determined to find that answer. I know that "Who am I?" sounds like a simple question, one we ought to be able to answer without difficulty. But it is not an easy question to answer. Often it is extremely puzzling."

- Ch'an/Zen Master Hsu Yun

Nafis Rahman
I like these instructions from Lama Surya Das's book "Natural Radiance". Very clear and direct imo (found it first in the Atr guide):

Once your mind is calm, focused, lucid, and clear, abruptly turn the mind on itself—mind the mind and turn it inward, with laserlike self-inquiry questions: "Who is thinking my thoughts? Who is trying to meditate? Who is it; what is it; where is it? Who is experiencing my experience right now?"

There is no need to analyze too much—just abruptly pop the question and observe what happens. Let go and see if you can startle yourself into a new way of seeing and being, short-circuiting your usual outward-looking, dualistic thought process of self and other. See through the seer, directly experience the experiencer, and be free; rest in luminous centerless openness, the natural Great Perfection, pure presence, rigpa.

Again cutting even deeper, abruptly turn the mind upon itself again: Who is experiencing? Who and what is hearing? Who and what is seeing, thinking, and feeling? Who is having these physical sensations? Who is it; what is it; where is it? Is it in the head; is it in the body; is it in the heart; is it in the mind and consciousness? Who is experiencing? Who or what am I? How is it happening? See if you can enter the bottomless gap between thoughts, beneath thoughts. See if you can directly experience whatever is not thought—the luminous awareness that exists prethought or beyond or beneath thought, or after all thought has ceased. Trace the source of all of your thoughts, feelings, experiences, physical sensations, and perceptions. Notice how they arise, and, after they arise, where they are in your present experience and where they go. See if you can follow the disillusion point back into the luminous void that is centerless—the openness that is everything's ultimate identity, the great Who, the great What that is known as buddha nature. And if you cannot find anything to follow, just rest in that great silence, and be nothing for just one instant. Being nothing but pure awareness for an instant would be transformative in itself, and more than enough. Emaho!

When the mind starts to move, as it will, and thoughts and feelings and physical sensations again begin to proliferate, turn the mind upon itself again instead of looking outward at outer phenomena, projections, and perceptions. Turn the searchlight inward and mind the mind, becoming more keenly aware of awareness itself. Continue this laserlike questioning of who and what is experiencing, who is thinking, who is hearing, who, what, where, how and then let go and release—drop everything: drop body and mind—and sense who or what is present between thoughts and when thought has ceased, even for a moment. If you discover that you really do not know who you are, then that is enough. That is what is true for you in this moment, and that is sufficient truth for now.

Also:

In order to answer the question "Who am I?", in order to go back to before the beginning within your own experience, you have to put your attention on the deepest sense of what it feels like to be yourself right now, and simultaneously let everything else go. Letting go means falling so deeply into yourself that all that is left is empty space.

To discover that infinite depth in your own self, you must find a way to enter into a deep state of meditation—so deep that your awareness of thought moves into the background and eventually disappears. As your awareness detaches itself from the thought-stream, your identification with emotion and memory begins to fall away. When awareness of thought disappears, awareness of the passing of time disappears along with it. If you keep penetrating into the infinite depths of your own self, even your awareness of your own physical form will disappear.

If you go deep enough, letting your attention expand and release from all objects in consciousness, you will find that all the structures of the created universe begin to crumble before your eyes. Awareness itself—limitless, empty, pristine—becomes the only object of your attention.

As your attention is released from the conditioned mind-process, freed from the confines of the body and the boundaries of the personal self-sense, the inner dimension of your own experience begins to open up to an immeasurable degree. Imagine that you have been fast asleep in a small, dark chamber, then suddenly awaken to find yourself floating in the infinite expanse of a vast, peaceful ocean. That's what this journey to the depths of your own self feels like. You become aware of a limitless dimension that you did not even know was there. Moments before, you may have experienced yourself as being trapped, a prisoner of your body, mind, and emotions. But when you awaken to this new dimension, all sense of confinement disappears. You find yourself resting in, and as, boundless empty space.

In that empty space, the mind is completely still; there is no time, no memory, not even a trace of personal history. And the deeper you fall into that space, the more everything will continue to fall away, until finally all that will be left is you. When you let absolutely everything go—body, mind, memory, and time—you will find, miraculously, that you still exist. In fact, in the end, you discover that all that exists is you!"

From: https://www.amazon.com/Evolutionary.../dp/1590792092

AMAZON.COM

Evolutionary Enlightenment: A New Path to Spiritual Awakening

Evolutionary Enlightenment: A New Path to Spiritual Awakening

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Soh Wei Yu

Admin

Nafis Rahman

Second section from Andrew Cohen, first section from Lama Surya Das?

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Nafis Rahman
Soh Wei Yu Yes!
Two other sections I really liked:
"The contemplation of consciousness—which is the contemplation of no-thing whatsoever—is endlessly fascinating. It's like staring at a candle in a dark night—you find yourself mesmerized by something that is unchanging yet infinitely compelling. You feel drawn into something you don't understand rationally but that your heart or soul grasps completely. You are drawn into it, and as you are drawn into it, the only thing you experience as real is the eternal or timeless nature of Being itself. You find yourself in a state of rapture, because the deepest part of yourself has been released from your ego's endless fears and concerns, and drawn out of the time process altogether."

_____

"The secret of enlightenment is the absolute, unequivocal conviction that it exists.
What does that mean? It means you have discovered an unshakable confidence in the fact of nonduality—in the perennial mystical revelation that IT IS . . . and I AM THAT. A confidence in that which can never be seen or known is the very ground of the enlightened state. Being is ungraspable, it's unknowable, it's ever elusive, and yet it is the only place you can find true confidence in life. Why? Because it is the very source of life itself.
The conscious experience of Being, which is what enlightenment is, has always been the ultimate answer to the most fundamental spiritual questions: Who am I? and Why am I here? Those who have tasted enlightened awareness find that in that experience, any trace of existential doubt and all the questions that go along with it instantaneously disappear. It's not even that they are answered, but rather, the questions lose their meaning. When you locate the nonrelative, or absolute, nature of consciousness in the depths of your own self, it is experienced as a clarity that is empty of content; a weightiness that is full of nothing in particular; a profound knowing that dissolves all questions. In that questionless state, you find yourself profoundly rooted and radically free, supported by an absolute confidence in the knowing of no-thing that changes everything. The experience of that empty ground is the answer—the one answer that always liberates each and every one of us. You simply know, unequivocally, before thought, that I am. That's the only answer: I AM. There is no why."
The book has a few other sections that are helpful for triggering I AM.

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Soh's e-book has a chapter on Self-Inquiry: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/12/my-e-booke-journal.html

Also read: The Direct Path to Your Real Self - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/the-direct-path-to-your-real-self.html , A Fan in Winter, A Straw Dog - http://diamondsutrazen.blogspot.com/2019/05/a-fan-in-winter-

straw-dog.html , https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/01/awakening-to-natural-state-guest.html , https://youtu.be/1wMHiPqSYt0 , https://youtu.be/tiIYI2i_CGs

The Sixth Ch'an/Zen Patriarch's Instructions to Hui Ming in the Platform Sutra

Hui Neng said, "Since you have come for the Dharma, you may put aside all conditions. Do not give rise to a single thought and I will teach it to you clearly." After a time, Hui Neng said, "With no thoughts of good and with no thoughts of evil, at just this moment, what is Superior One Hui Ming's original face?" At these words, Hui Ming was greatly enlightened.

Hui Ming asked further, "Apart from the secret speech and secret meanings just spoken, is there yet another secret meaning?"

Hui Neng said, "What has been spoken to you is not secret. If you turn the illumination inward, the secret is with you."

Hui Ming said, "Although Hui Ming was at Huang Mei he had not yet awakened to his original face. Now that he has been favored with this instruction he is like one who drinks water and knows for himself whether it is cold or warm. The cultivator is now Hui Ming's master."

"If you feel that way," said Hui Neng, "then you and I have the same master, Huang Mei. Protect yourself well."

Zen Master Bassui on Finding Your True Nature

"What is the master [within you] who at this very moment is seeing and hearing? If you reply, as most do, that it is Mind or Nature or Buddha or one's Face before birth or one's Original Home or Koan or Being or Nothingness or Emptiness or Form-and-Color or the Known or the Unknown or Truth or Delusion, or say something or remain silent, or regard it as Enlightenment or Ignorance, you fall into error at once. What is more, if you are so foolhardy as to doubt the reality of this master, you bind yourself though you use no rope. However much you try to know it through logical reasoning or to name or call it, you are doomed to failure. And even though all of you becomes one mass of questioning as you turn inward and intently search the very core of your being, you will find nothing that can be termed Mind or Essence. Yet should someone call your name, something from within will hear and respond. Find out this instant who it is!

If you push forward with your last ounce of strength at the very point where the path of your thinking has been blocked, and then, completely stymied, leap with hands high in the air into the tremendous abyss of fire confronting you — into the ever-burning flame of your own primordial nature — all ego-consciousness, all delusive feelings and thoughts and perceptions will perish with your ego-root and the true source of your Self-nature will appear. You will feel resurrected, all sickness having completely vanished, and will experience genuine peace and joy." –Bassui

...

If you want to realize your own Mind, you must first of all look into the source from which thoughts flow. Sleeping and working, standing and sitting, profoundly ask yourself, "What is my own Mind?" with an intense yearning to resolve this question. This is called "training" or "practice" or "desire for truth" or "thirst for realization." What is termed Zazen is no more than looking into one's own mind. It is better to search your own mind devotedly than to read and recite innumerable sutras and dharani every day for countless years.

...

At work, at rest, never stop trying to realize *who* it is that hears. Even though your questioning becomes almost unconscious, you won't find the one who hears, and all your efforts will come to naught.

Yet sounds can be heard, so question yourself to an even profounder level.

At last, every vestige of self-awareness will disappear and you *will feel like a cloudless sky. Within yourself you will find no "I,"* nor will you discover anyone who hears. *This Mind is like the void, and yet it hasn't a single spot that can be called empty.*

This state is OFTEN MISTAKEN FOR Self-realization. ***(Comments by Soh: mistaking experience for realization, as I explained the difference between experience and realization above)***

Cast off what has been realized. Turn back *to the subject* that realizes, to *the root bottom*, and resolutely go on.

What is this mind? *Who* is hearing these sounds? **Your physical being doesn't hear, nor does the void.** Then *what* does?

Keep asking with all your strength, "What is it that hears!?" Only when you have *completely exhausted* the questioning will the question burst; now you will feel like a man come back from the dead.

This is true Realization.

-- Rinzai Zen master Bassui Tokusho, 1327-87

Read the whole discourse by Bassui on Self-Enquiry here: https://www.thedaobums.com/topic/12089-zen-master-bassuis-one-mind/ . This teaching by Bassui also appears in "Three Pillars of Zen", a recommended reading.

Excerpt from Three Pillars of Zen

Excerpts from recommended reading, Three Pillars of Zen:

"ROSHI [SHARPLY]: Who are you? [No answer.] Who are you!STUDENT [PAUSING]: I don't know.ROSHI: Good! Do you know what you mean by "I don't know"?STUDENT: No, I don't.ROSHI: You are You! You are only You—that is all.STUDENT: What did you mean by "Good!" when I answered "I don'tknow"?ROSHI: In the profoundest sense, we can know nothing.STUDENT: Yesterday when you told me you were going to ask mewho I am, I concluded that I must have some answer prepared, so Ithought of various responses, but just now when you

asked “Who are you?” I couldn’t think of a single thing.ROSHI: Excellent! It shows your mind is emptied of all ideas. Now you can respond with your whole being, not with just your head. When I said I would ask you who you are, I didn’t want you toreason out an answer but only to penetrate deeper and deeper intoyourself with “Who am I?” When you come to the sudden inner realization of your True-nature, you will be able to respond instantly without reflection.

What is this [suddenly striking tatami mat with baton]? [No answer] Probe further! Your mind is almost ripe.

STUDENT: I have been asking and asking “Who am I?” until I feel there is just no answer to this question. ROSHI: You won’t find an entity called “I.” STUDENT [HEATEDLY]: Then why am I asking the question! ROSHI: Because in your present state you can’t help yourself. The ordinary person is forever asking “Why?” or “What?” or “Who?” There are many koans in which monks ask “What is Buddha?” or “Why did Bodhidharma come from India to China?” The aim of the master’s response is to break open the monk’s deluded mind so that he can realize his question is an abstraction.

STUDENT: I have been reading the English translation of the Bassui letters23 during your morning lecture, as you suggested I do. At onepoint Bassui says: “Who is the Master that moves the hands?” ROSHI: There is no real answer to “Who?” “What?” or “Why?” Whyis sugar sweet? Sugar is sugar. Sugar! STUDENT: You told me earlier, “You are You!” All right, I am I—I accept that. Isn’t this enough? What more need I do? Why must Ikeep struggling with this question? ROSHI: Because this understanding is external to you—you don’treally know what you mean by “I am I.” You must come up againstthis question with the force of a bomb, and all your intellectualnotions and ideas must be annihilated. The only way to resolve thisquestion is to come to the explosive inner realization thateverything is [ultimately reducible to] Nothing. If yourunderstanding is merely theoretical, you will forever ask “Who?”“What?” and “Why?”

...

6. Evidence of the Joy and Peace of Being at One with the Dharma DECEMBER 27: Dear Harada-roshi: Rejoice with me! At last I have discerned my Face before my parents were born with a clarity that penetrates from heaven to the very bottom of the earth. And yet I have never regarded myself as adesperate seeker. You and I have cherished a profound illusion: that it is exalting to vow to rescue all deluded creatures no matter how many aeons it takes. But one so deluded is called a Bodhisattva. To realize there is no oneto save is [real] saving. Oh, how funny! Nonetheless, my respect for you as a roshi knows no bounds... ...At last I have recovered my composure. With the realization thatBuddha is myself.I am Buddha. I am I. I am selfless I. I have come to understand clearly the single-minded love andrespect I feel toward you.”

Inquiry for First Awakening

Inquiry for First Awakening

Taken from Awakening, Realization and Liberation https://www.facebook.com/groups/546474355949572/

Written by Angelo Gerangelo

Inquiry for First Awakening

The inquiry that leads to first awakening is a funny thing. We want to know "how" precisely to do that inquiry, which is completely understandable. The thing is that it's not wholly conveyable by describing a certain technique. Really it's a matter of finding that sweet spot where surrender and intention meet. I will describe an approach here, but it's important to keep in mind that in the end, you don't have the power (as what you take yourself to be) to wake yourself up. Only Life has that power. So as we give ourselves to a certain inquiry or practice it's imperative that we remain open. We have to keep the portals open to mystery, and possibility. We have to recognize that the constant concluding that "no this isn't it, no this isn't it either..." is simply the activity of the mind. Those are thoughts. If we believe a single thought then we will believe the next one and on and on. If however we recognize that, "oh that doubt is simply a thought arising now," then we have the opportunity to recognize that that thought will subside on its own... and yet "I" as the knower of that thought am still here! We can now become fascinated with what is here once that thought (or any thought) subsides. What is in this gap between thoughts? What is this pure sense of I, pure sense of knowing, pure sense of Being? What is this light that can shine on and illuminate a thought (as it does thousands of times per day), and yet still shines when no thought is present. It is self illuminating. What is the nature of the one that notices thoughts, is awake and aware before, during, and after a thought, and is not altered in any way by any thought? Please understand that when you ask these questions you are not looking for a thought answer, the answer is the experience itself.

When we start to allow our attention to relax into this wider perspective we start to unbind ourselves from thought. We begin to recognize the nature of unbound consciousness by feel, by instinct. This is the way in.

At first we may conclude that this gap, this thoughtless consciousness is uninteresting, unimportant. It feels quite neutral, and the busy mind can't do anything with neutral so we might be inclined to purposely engage thoughts again. If we recognize that "not interesting, not important, not valuable" are all thoughts and simply return to this fluid consciousness, it will start to expand. But there is no need to think about expansion or watch for it. It will do this naturally if we stay with it. If you are willing to recognize every thought and image in the mind as such, and keep your attention alert but relaxed into the "stuff" of thought that is continuous with the sense of I, it will all take care of itself. Just be willing to suspend judgement. Be willing to forego conclusions. Be willing to let go of all monitoring of your progress, because these are all thoughts. Be open to the pure experience. Just return again and again to this place of consciousness with no object or pure sense of I Am. If you are willing to do this it will teach itself to you in a way that neither I nor anyone I've ever seen can explain, but it is more real than real.

Happy Travels.

What the I AM Realization Is Not

The key aspect that distinguishes I AM realization from I AM experience is that there is the quality of complete doubtless certainty of Self that is unshakeable, a Eureka moment where you have found out what you truly are, and that certainty remains from that point onwards.

Furthermore - the I AM is not a fabricated state. It is Unfabricated Presence-Awareness. You do not "cultivate" the I AM Presence. It is not merely a state of Witnessing to be maintained. It is not a maintenance state. It is not a state to be reached through effort and cultivation. Instead it is discovered and directly realized to be one's doubtless shining core of Existence, much like the clouds dissipating (our misidentification with perceived objects of mind and body as self) revealing the shining sun that was all along present but never noticed.

If one has an experience of being a Witness or enter into a state of Witnessing, but it needs to be "maintained" or is felt to be "gained" or "lost", even if one intuits that Witness to be ever-present, that is still an "experience" but not "realization" (see the classifications above). This does not mean after the I AM realization one can never be distracted by thoughts ever, it just means there is a kind of unshakeable certainty of Being that is never lost. You realized this is You without a shadow of doubt, as the ground of Being. As John Tan puts it, *"Being freed from individuality -- coming and going, life and death, all phenomenon merely pop in and out from the background of the AMness. The AMness is not experienced as an 'entity' residing anywhere, neither within nor without; rather it is experienced as the ground reality for all phenomenon to take place. Even in the moment of subsiding (death), the yogi is thoroughly authenticated with that reality; experiencing the 'Real' as clear as it can be. We cannot lose that AMness; rather all things can only dissolve and re-emerges from it. The AMness has not moved, there is no coming and going. This "AMness" is God."*

The I AM is also not something that one can only "experience" during a state of meditative trance at a faraway mountain shielded from daily life. Someone who realized I AM will come to understand, as John Tan puts it in 2007, "AMness has limitless potential and must be expressed in a relative world in constant interaction." As the source and ground of everything, AMness is seen to have infinite potentiality to express in, through and as everything.

The I AM Presence as discovered in Self-Realization is a non-dual, Self-Aware Presence of Being. You realize yourself to be a shining Aware-Presence, but it is not a subject-object awareness where "you" know you are a "presence" that is "aware", it is not 'you' knowing Presence (subject knowing object) but there is only You Being Presence-Awareness. It is a non-dual direct realization and direct taste of Mind. At a later phase, this non-dual luminous taste of 'existence' is brought from the background to the foreground into all manifestation, which will be elaborated on in the further chapters of this guide.

"After Self-Realization, there is a doubtless certainty of Being that was never lost, so I no longer needed to do self inquiry. I had a certainty that Awareness is what I am, and it is not a maintenance state, not something I can 'gain' and 'lose'." - Soh, 2018

"You experience of 'Iness" has not come to a point of stillness yet. That is why it is not that sort of Realization I am looking at." - John Tan to Soh in 2009, one year prior to Soh's realization of I AM

If you are still unsure if what you had is a glimpse of recognition or experience of I AM or the doubtless Self-Realization, check out this article - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/i-am-experienceglimpserecognition-vs-i.html.

'Watch your mind, how it comes into being, how it operates. As you watch your mind, you discover your self as the watcher. When you stand motionless, only watching, you discover your self as the light behind the watcher. The source of light is dark, unknown is the source of knowledge. That source alone is. Go back to that source and abide there'

NM, Page 151, 'I am That'

The I AM realization is not the same as mundane meditative experiences of clarity, bliss and non-thought. If one experiences meditative states, they should be abruptly interrupted with a KATZ, a Phat, or a Zen master's whack so that you snap out of that meditation mood or any coarse or subtle thought into Instant Presence prior to concepts.

"Not fixating outwardly or holding inwardly is the shamatha without support, an indiffernet state that needs to be blown apart. After shouting PHAT, the abiding is destroyed. Here, when you simply rest, there is no thought going on, but there is still some subtle fixation on that stillness and that has to collapse. After you shout a sudden, very strong, and sharp PHAT, the abiding and not abiding are destroyed. It shatters that fixation so there is only the dharmakaya awareness left. Then there is a blank and free state, which is indescribable. Recognize this as the dharmakaya awareness. This is the introduction to naked dharmakaya through stillness.

There are two different ways of recognizing the essence of mind: when it is still and when it is thinking. The introduction through movement is when a thought arises; here you recognize the one who has thoughts. By recognizing the knower, you are introduced through movement. At that time, simply remain naturally free. In recognizing your own rigpa, the movement disappears. Recognize the dharmakaya awareness.

All sentient beings have arising and ceasing (of thought); mind will not only stay or only move. A thought doesn't arise by itself. It needs the circumstances of a mental or external object, our senses, and our conscious mind directed toward that – these three are the basis of movement. There have to be some factors coming together or a thought to arise. Movement comes when there is the external grasped object and the internal fixating mind. When thoughts of happiness and sadness arise, if you simply look directly, as it is said in the very well-known Mahamudra teachings, then the essence of thought is the dharmakaya. When a thought arises, if you immediately recognize who is it that thinks, the thought self-vanishes, self-evaporates. Once the thought vanishes, there is nothing but unimpeded awareness.

Thoughts do arise and there are different ways of recognizing essence, as I previously mentioned – through a strong emotion like devotion or compassion, or with the strong exclamation of PHAT, or simply recognizing who it is that thinks. Through any of these ways, the thought will disappears. Recognize (the essence of) the thought and the thought will vanish. It will be traceless, as in the example of writing in space. It does not stay; this is the example." – Dzogchen teacher Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche

Dzogchen teacher Tenzin Wangyal (1997, 29) points out:
“The gap between two thoughts is essence. But if in that gap there is a lack of presence, it becomes ignorance and we experience only a lack of awareness, almost an unconsciousness. If there is presence in the gap, then we experience the dharmakaya [the ultimate].”

(It should be noted that although the I AM realization is the preliminary or beginning realization in many direct paths in Buddhism and outside Buddhism, the I AM realization is not considered the final realization in the Dzogchen tradition as explained in Acarya Malcolm on Dzogchen and Advaita Vedanta and The Degrees of Rigpa)

“...the second variety- this need not be said - because such expressions as "scrutiny of mind," "resting in naked awareness" and so forth are characteristics of this second type of instruction or approach.
The main emphasis in this section of the text and the main emphasis in the presentation of such instructions as "scrutiny of the mind" and "resting in naked, direct awareness" is to let go of intellectual contrivance such as inferential reasoning. Yet, at the same time, having let go of intellectualization per se it is possible to deviate in a further way, namely into attachment to experience. While we say that we are concerned with experiential guidance, then there is a type of experience that can arise that can be deceptive, deceptive in a sense that this experience itself can also veil naked awareness, can prevent one from contacting naked awareness or experiencing naked awareness directly.
There are three different experiences that can arise which can veil awareness in that way. The first is an experience of bliss; a traditional term for this is "being stuck to the glue of the disturbing emotions." This is an experience in meditation where, because of the process of practice, there is some comfort, bliss and joy, and being delighted in this, one identifies with it. But this bliss is not rig-pa, it is not "awareness."
A similar thing that can happen is an experience of intense lucidity or clarity. One identifies with ir and insists, "I see this." There is an experience of some kind of lucid insight and that can also obscure the direct experience of awareness. There can also be an obscuration through the experience of non-conceptuality. All of these are experiences that are distinct from realization. While the nature that is realized when one has actual realization cannot be said not to be blissful and certainly not to be not lucid, nevertheless the quality of this is very different from the quality of mere experience. Mere experience is something the siddhas of the past have said does not last; it is here today and gone tomorrow.

Getting caught up in experience does veil one's awareness -
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Soh Wei Yu
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The last paragraph is great. The difference between experience and realization. The term "awareness" here seems to be a reference to rigpa. Rigpa is jnana, which Malcolm says should be translated as "knowledge" instead of "awareness". It means to recognise your true essence.
Rigpa also comes in degrees, as Malcolm pointed out. The initial rigpa is the I AM then later matured into anatta/emptiness.
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Another word is 'gnosis'. It's not intellectual knowledge

Rigpa is also distinguished from other neutral indeterminate states of alaya, a state of indifference and non-recognition even if accompanied with other meditative experiences of clarity, non-thought and bliss. Rigpa is accompanied with clear certainty about the essence/nature of awareness/mind (and even this comes in various degrees as stated above).

For example, as Mipham Rinpoche pointed out here (do read the whole text).

https://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/mipham/mipham-lamp

"When you leave your mind in a state of natural rest, without thinking any particular thought, and at the same time maintain some kind of mindfulness, you can experience a state of vacant, neutral, apathetic indifference, called “lungmaten”, (a ‘no-man’s land’), where your consciousness is dull and blank.
In this, there is not any of the clear insight of vipaśyanā, which discerns things precisely, and so the masters call it marigpa (“non-recognition, ignorance, unknowing”). Since you cannot define it and say “This is what it’s like”, or “This is it!” such a state is called lungmaten (“undecided, indeterminate”). And since you cannot say what kind of state it is you are resting in, or what your mind is thinking, it is also called tha mal tang nyom (“an ordinary state of apathetic indifference”).
In fact, you are stuck in an ordinary state within the ālaya.
You need to use such a means of resting the mind, as a stepping stone, so as to give rise to the non-conceptual state of primordial wisdom. However, if there is not the self-recognition of primordial wisdom which is our rigpa, then it cannot count as the main (meditation) practice of Dzogchen. As The Aspiration Prayer of Samantabhadra says:
A blank state, devoid of any thought whatsoever—
That is marigpa, the cause of delusion.
Therefore, when mind experiences this kind of dull state that lacks any thought or mental activity, by allowing your attention to turn naturally and gently towards the one who is aware of this state—the one who is not thinking—you discover the pure awareness of rigpa, free of any movement of thought, beyond any notion of outside or inside, unimpeded and open, like the clear sky.

Although there is no dualistic separation here between an experience and an experiencer, still the mind is certain about its own true nature, and there is a sense that, “There is nothing whatsoever beyond this.” When this occurs, because you can not conceptualize it or express it in words, it is acceptable to apply such terms as: “free from all extremes”, “beyond description”, “the fundamental state of clear light” and “the pure awareness of rigpa.”
As the wisdom of recognizing your own true nature dawns, it clears away the blinding darkness of confusion, and, just as you can see clearly the inside of your home once the sun has risen, you gain confident certainty in the true nature of your mind.""

Question: “"So the direct path watches the watcher watch the watching . This is "I am"?"

Soh: In the I AM, there is no watcher-watched, just pure Presence, Being. In other words, in the moment of authenticating Presence, you are not watching Presence as if a watcher, you are just Presence Being Presence. Self-Aware Beingness/Presence, non-dual. It is pure Awareness, the Witness, etc, but it is not merely a state of witnessing.

Question: " I'm definitely still fabricating. Subtle fine fabrications. Watching the watcher watch the watcher watch. I feel like I need to go back to. Metta/Bodhi-citta meditation. That was working. Lately meditation is contrived and the relaxation feels like trying to relax in to awareness isn't working."

Soh: I AM is the unfabricated Presence, without the recursive watching the watcher watching the watcher etc.

At the moment you pause all concepts, all fabrication, what is left? There is an undeniable naked luminous sheer sense of Existence, Presence-Awareness, without a trace of separation into a watcher and object watched.

Awareness aware of itself is simply awareness being itself. Self-aware presence.

The mistake you seem to make is objectifying the watcher or awareness. Awareness is not an object outside of yourself to be sought or watched. There is no duality in it. It is pure naked Presence. It is You, your very essence.

You may find these pointers by Ken Wilber useful: https://www.lionsroar.com/so-who-are-you/ and https://integrallife.com/always-already-the-brilliant-clarity-of-ever-present-awareness/

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“"If We talk of knowing the Self, there must be two selves, one a knowing self, another the self which is known, and the process of knowing. The state we call realisation is simply being oneself, not knowing anything or becoming anything. If one has realised, one is that which alone is and which alone has always been. One cannot describe that state. One can only be that. Of course, we loosely talk of Self-realisation, for want of a better term. How to 'real-ise' or make real that which alone is real?'” – Ramana Maharshi, ‘Be As You Are’ – a highly recommended book for those practicing Self-Enquiry https://www.amazon.com/Be-As-You-Are-Teachings/dp/0140190627

Why Realize the I AM (Can I skip straight away to more "advanced stages" like anatta?)

Some people wonder if it is necessary to go through the I AM realization before they realize further stages of insight like Anatta (Stage 5). While possible, it is easy to miss out certain aspects like the luminous Presence. One can have non-dual experiences but it is dry and barren without the luminous taste of Presence-Awareness. Furthermore, as discussed towards the end of this document, the stages are not to be seen as purely linear progression nor as a measurement of importance -- even the first phase of I AM Realization is important as it brings out the luminous essence. Actually, the taste of Stage 1 (I AM) and Stage 4 and 5 is similar, only the insight and view is different. At Stage 4, John Tan wrote that it is the same luminous taste as the direct taste of Mind (called "I AM") but now extended to all six senses.

"[11:25 AM, 6/6/2020] John Tan: People that do not go through the phases of insights between I AM will not know the difference but it is important to go through I AM to realize the intensity."

In 2009, John Tan wrote:

"Hi Teck Cheong,

What you described is fine and it can be considered vipassana meditation too but you must be clear what is the main objective of practicing that way. Ironically, the real purpose only becomes obvious after the arising insight of anatta. What I gathered so far from your descriptions are not so much about anatta or empty nature of phenomena but are rather drawn towards Awareness practice. So it will be good to start from understanding what Awareness truly is. All the method of practices that you mentioned will lead to a quality of experience that is non-conceptual. You can have non-conceptual experience of sound, taste...etc...but more importantly in my opinion, you should start from having a direct, non-conceptual experience of Awareness (first glimpse of our luminous essence). Once you have a 'taste' of what Awareness is, you can then think of 'expanding' this bare awareness and gradually understand what does 'heightening and expanding' mean from the perspective of Awareness.

Next, although you hear and see 'non-dual, anatta and dependent origination' all over the place in An Eternal Now's forum (the recent Toni Packer's books you bought are about non-dual and anatta), there is nothing wrong being 'dualistic' for a start. Even after direct non-conceptual experience of Awareness, our view will still continue to be dualistic; so do not have the idea that being dualistic is bad although it prevents thorough experience of liberation.

The comment given by Dharma Dan is very insightful but of late, I realized that it is important to have a first glimpse of our luminous essence directly before proceeding into such understanding. Sometimes understanding something too early will deny oneself from actual realization as it becomes conceptual. Once the conceptual understanding is formed, even qualified masters will find it difficult to lead the practitioner to the actual 'realization' as a practitioner mistakes conceptual understanding for realization.

Rgds,

John"

“The anatta I realized is quite unique. It is not just a realization of no-self. But it must first have an intuitive insight of Presence. Otherwise will have to reverse the phases of insights.” - John Tan, 2018

“(1:28 AM) Thusness: complete stillness, ultimate, without thoughts
complete certainty. Ramana Maharshi at later phase is talking about that
resting completely as Self
(1:30 AM) Thusness: when he visualized that he is being dead and carried to be burnt
he realises he is not the body. it is not the direct experience of "I AM"
(1:31 AM) AEN: not?
(1:31 AM) Thusness: yes. Not. it is just a glimpse, not that direct experience. That experience is like what a Zen master asking a koan. It is that sort of experience. direct realisation of the 'I'. found it. without thoughts, no inference, entire and complete. just that experience rest in the I. not as everything, and the empty nature is not seen. that experience is correct
(1:34 AM) AEN: icic.. correct?
(1:34 AM) Thusness: yeah. have you read my stage 4
(1:34 AM) AEN: yea, what about it
(1:34 AM) Thusness: i said the sound is exactly like i am. it is not like your experience of sound leh
(1:35 AM) AEN: what do you mean? its totally nondual?
(1:35 AM) Thusness: Non dual is no separation. There are differing degrees. Do you feel like you are God? When one experiences "I AM", he feels like he is God. That sort of experience leh. Can that experience be ordinary? It is transcendental
(1:37 AM) AEN: icic.. just now you said the forum there's this article that was inferring and not direct experience. that is why one is led to the journey into perfecting that state
(1:38 AM) AEN: which one you referring to
(1:39 AM) Thusness: like you do this, shake a bit then you realise that. like it is like a screen... Nothing like that. You cannot understand awareness that way. Either by self enquiry you directly experience it, or koan. there is no such thing as unsure

(1:41 AM) AEN: http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6865032740128202927 [Soh: old link no longer working, check out https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dTpMc4sc2c , and also https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVYv9ktilQw]
(1:41 AM) Thusness: there are few ramana
(1:41 AM) AEN: its ramana maharshi
(1:47 AM) Thusness: if a practitioner can experience like what maharshi experience as SELF in anatta, then he is near full enlightenment liao. :P
(1:47 AM) AEN: oic.. you mean someone who experience anatta may not experience what ramana experience? both are required?

(1:48 AM) Thusness: it is the thoroughness and the depth and degree of luminosity. for non-dual anatta to have that sort of presence, there must be complete effortlessness. because unlike concentrative mode of practice, non-dual or the formless and pathless path requires one to be completely effortless and spontaneous to have total non-dual luminosity
(1:51 AM) AEN: oic.. btw for ramana it's still a concentrative mode of practice rite, like abiding on self
(1:52 AM) Thusness: to me yes
(1:52 AM) AEN: icic..
(1:53 AM) Thusness: the video is good

(1:55 AM) Thusness: if a person can have that experience then go into nondual, it is different. if anatta can be experienced, it will be better
(1:56 AM) AEN: oic.. what do you mean by 'it is different'
(1:57 AM) Thusness: a person can experience non-dual, there is no separation. but there is no such experience like "I AM", so he does not have that 'quality' of experience. however he a practitioner experience that "I AM" then when non-dual, he knows that there is such an experience and all experiences are really like that
(1:59 AM) AEN: oic.. the nondual experience will be more indepth?
(1:59 AM) Thusness: no. it is all the same, but found in all manifestation, not as a stage. i wrote in luminousemptiness [Soh: a good blog - http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/] that if luminosity and emptiness is taught but there is no realisation that it is the great bliss, then one has not realised anything. but chodpa said, not that it is pointless but just a step along the path. so what is it the geat bliss? it is actually a sort of absorption. will talk about that next time. i think i will write about anatta, so that you don't get confused with non-dual. anatta is about no agent. clarity that there is no agent, and because there is no agent, it has to be direct. it is naturally non dual" - Excerpts from I AM Experience/Glimpse/Recognition vs I AM Realization (Certainty of Being)

I noticed that many Buddhists trained under the doctrine of anatta and emptiness seem to be put off by the description of "I AM realization" as it seems to contradict anatta. This will prevent their progress as they will fail to appreciate and realize the depth of luminous presence, and their understanding of anatta and emptiness remains intellectual. It should be understood that the I AM realization does not contradict Anatta realization but complements it. It is the "original face before your parents were born" of Zen, and the unfabricated clarity in Dzogchen that serves as initial rigpa, it is also the initial certainty of Mind discovered in the first of the four yogas of Mahamudra (see: Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal). Calling it "I AM" is just another name for the same thing, and you should also know that AtR's definition of I AM is different from Buddhism's term "conceit of I Am" or Nisargadatta's I Am. The I AM of AtR is a direct taste and realization of the Mind of Clear Light.

The view gets refined and the taste gets brought to effortless maturity and non-contrivance in all manifestation as one's insights deepen.

As John Tan also said in 2011:

"John: what is "I AM"

is it a pce? (Soh: PCE = pure consciousness experience, see glossary at the bottom of this document)
is there emotion
is there feeling
is there thought
is there division or complete stillness?
in hearing there is just sound, just this complete, direct clarity of sound!
so what is "I AM"?

Soh Wei Yu: it is the same
just that pure non conceptual thought

John: is there 'being'?

Soh Wei Yu: no, an ultimate identity is created as an afterthought

John: indeed
it is the mis-interpretation after that experience that is causing the confusion
that experience itself is pure conscious experience
there is nothing that is impure
that is why it is a sense of pure existence
it is only mistaken due to the 'wrong view'
so it is a pure conscious experience in thought.
not sound, taste, touch...etc
PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) is about direct and pure experience of whatever we encounter in sight, sound, taste...
the quality and depth of experience in sound
in contacts
in taste
in scenery
has he truly experience the immense luminous clarity in the senses?
if so, what about 'thought'?
when all senses are shut
the pure sense of existence as it is when the senses are shut.
then with senses open
have a clear understanding
do not compare irrationally without clear understanding"

"...There is nothing underneath everything, in the state of I AM, it is just I AM. The rest of the 5 sense doors are shut. Everything else is excluded. It is called I simply because of the koan, nothing else.

What's experienced is similar to hearing sound without the sense of hearer. So keep the experience but refine the view." - John Tan to someone in Awakening to Reality Discussion Group **(note: this group is now closed, however you can join to access the old discussions. It is a treasure trove of information.)**, 2019

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../reality-i-am...

Excerpt:

[5:24 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: What is the most important experience in I M?
[5:24 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: What must happen in I M?
[5:25 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: There is not even an M, just I... complete stillness, just I correct?
[5:26 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Realization, certainty of being.. yes just stillness and doubtless sense of I/Existence
[5:26 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: And what is the complete stillness just I?
[5:26 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Just I, just presence itself
[5:28 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: This stillness absorbs excludes and includes everything into just I. What is that experience called?
[5:29 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I am everything?
[5:29 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: That experience is non-dual.
[5:30 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: And in that experience actually, there is no external nor internal, there is also no observer or observed.
[5:30 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: Just complete stillness as I.
[5:31 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. yeah even I AM is nondual
[5:31 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: That is ur first phase of a non dual experience.
[5:32 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: We say this is the pure thought experience in stillness
[5:32 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: Thought realm
[5:33 PM, 4/24/2020] John Tan: But at that moment we don't know that...we treated that as ultimate reality.
[5:33 PM, 4/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah

In 2007:

(9:12 PM) Thusness: you don't think that "I AMness" is low stage of enlightenment leh
(9:12 PM) Thusness: the experience is the same. it is just the clarity. In terms of insight. Not experience.
(9:13 PM) AEN: icic..
(9:13 PM) Thusness: so a person that has experience "I AMness" and non dual is the same. except the insight is different.
(9:13 PM) AEN: oic
(9:13 PM) Thusness: non dual is every moment there is the experience of presence. or the insight into the every moment experience of presence. because what that prevent that experience is the illusion of self and "I AM" is that distorted view. the experience is the same leh.
(9:15 PM) Thusness: didn't you see i always say there is nothing wrong with that experience to longchen, jonls... i only say it is skewed towards the thought realm. so don't differentiate but know what is the problem. I always say it is misinterpretation of the experience of presence. not the experience itself. but "I AMness" prevents us from seeing.

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“It is not the contemplations that are important, it is the view brought to contemplation that makes the difference. For example, there is no actual difference between the Hindu Nirvikalpa samadhi and Vajropama samadhi in terms of its content, but the fact that one is accompanied by insight and the other is not makes the difference between whether it is mundane or liberative.” – Dzogchen Teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2014

In 2009:

“(10:49 PM) Thusness: by the way you know about hokai description and "I AM" is the same experience?
(10:50 PM) AEN: the watcher right
(10:52 PM) Thusness: nope. i mean the shingon practice of the body, mind, speech into one.
(10:53 PM) AEN: oh thats i am experience?
(10:53 PM) Thusness: yes, except that the object of practice is not based on consciousness. what is meant by foreground? it is the disappearance of the background and whats left is it. similarly the "I AM" is the experience of no background and experiencing consciousness directly. that is why it is just simply "I-I" or "I AM"
(10:57 PM) AEN: i've heard of the way people describe consciousness as the background consciousness becoming the foreground... so there's only consciousness aware of itself and thats still like I AM experience
(10:57 PM) Thusness: that is why it is described that way, awareness aware of itself and as itself.
(10:57 PM) AEN: but you also said I AM people sink to a background?
(10:57 PM) Thusness: yes
(10:57 PM) AEN: sinking to background = background becoming foreground?
(10:58 PM) Thusness: that is why i said it is misunderstood. and we treat that as ultimate.
(10:58 PM) AEN: icic but what hokai described is also nondual experience rite
(10:58 PM) Thusness: I have told you many times that the experience is right but the understanding is wrong. that is why it is an insight and opening of the wisdom eyes. there is nothing wrong with the experience of I AM". did i say that there is anything wrong with it?
(10:59 PM) AEN: nope
(10:59 PM) Thusness: even in stage 4 what did I say?
(11:00 PM) AEN: its the same experience except in sound, sight, etc
(11:00 PM) Thusness: sound as the exact same experience as "I AM"... as presence.
(11:00 PM) AEN: icic
(11:00 PM) Thusness: yes”

“"I AM" is a luminous thought in samadhi as I-I. Anatta is a realization of that in extending the insight to the 6 entries and exits.” – John Tan, 2018

Excerpt from **(a must read!)** No Awareness Does Not Mean Non-Existence of Awareness https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/01/no-awareness-does-not-mean-non.html :

“2010:

(11:15 PM) Thusness: but understanding it wrongly is another matter
can you deny Witnessing?
(11:16 PM) Thusness: can you deny that certainty of being?
(11:16 PM) AEN: no
(11:16 PM) Thusness: then there is nothing wrong with it
how could you deny your very own existence?
(11:17 PM) Thusness: how could you deny existence at all
(11:17 PM) Thusness: there is nothing wrong experiencing directly without intermediary the pure sense of existence
(11:18 PM) Thusness: after this direct experience, you should refine your understanding, your view, your insights
(11:19 PM) Thusness: not after the experience, deviate from the right view, re-enforce your wrong view
(11:19 PM) Thusness: you do not deny the witness, you refine your insight of it
what is meant by non-dual
(11:19 PM) Thusness: what is meant by non-conceptual
what is being spontaneous
what is the 'impersonality' aspect
(11:20 PM) Thusness: what is luminosity.
(11:20 PM) Thusness: you never experience anything unchanging
(11:21
PM) Thusness: in later phase, when you experience non-dual, there is
still this tendency to focus on a background... and that will prevent ur
progress into the direct insight into the TATA as described in the tata
article. (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/04/tada.html)

(Soh: Also see, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/12/zen-master-ven-jinmyo-renge-senseis.html
(compilation of WWZC’s articles))
(11:22 PM) Thusness: and there are still different degree of intensity even you realized to that level.
(11:23 PM) AEN: non dual?
(11:23 PM) Thusness: tada (an article) is more than non-dual...it is phase 5-7
(11:24 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:24 PM) Thusness: it is all about the integration of the insight of anatta and emptiness
(11:25
PM) Thusness: vividness into transience, feeling what i called 'the
texture and fabric' of Awareness as forms is very important
then come emptiness
(11:26 PM) Thusness: the integration of luminosity and emptiness

(10:45 PM) Thusness: do not deny that Witnessing but refine the view, that is very important
(10:46 PM) Thusness: so far, you have correctly emphasized the importance of witnessing
(10:46 PM) Thusness: unlike in the past, you gave people the impression that you are denying this witnessing
presence
(10:46 PM) Thusness: you merely deny the personification, reification and objectification
(10:47 PM) Thusness: so that you can progress further and realize our empty nature.

but don't always post what i told you in msn
(10:48 PM) Thusness: in no time, i will become sort of cult leader
(10:48 PM) AEN: oic.. lol
(10:49 PM) Thusness: anatta is no ordinary insight. When we can reach the level of thorough transparency, you will realize the benefits
(10:50 PM) Thusness: non-conceptuality, clarity, luminosity, transparency, openness, spaciousness, thoughtlessness, non-locality...all these descriptions become quite meaningless.

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Session Start: Sunday, October 19, 2008

(1:01 PM) Thusness: Yes
(1:01 PM) Thusness: Actually practice is not to deny this 'Jue' (awareness)

(6:11 PM) Thusness: the way you explained as if 'there is no Awareness'.
(6:11 PM) Thusness: People at times mistaken what you are trying to convey.but to correctly understand this 'jue' so that it can be experienced from all moments effortlessly.
(1:01 PM) Thusness: But when a practitioner heard that it is not 'IT', they immediately began to worry because it is their most precious state.
(1:01 PM) Thusness: All the phases written is about this 'Jue' or Awareness.
(1:01 PM) Thusness: However what Awareness really is isn't correctly experienced.
(1:01PM) Thusness: Because it isn't correctly experienced, we say that 'Awareness that you try to keep' does not exist in such a way.
(1:01 PM) Thusness: It does not mean there is no Awareness."

Soh also wrote that from the perspective of anatta, "Presence is just appearance (however it will not be seen as such prior to anatta realization, instead it will be seen as very Absolute and Ultimate and distinguished from other transient appearances due to immaturity of insight). The so called formless is really another appearance, another manifestation, not any different from the appearance of a color, a sound. A sound is not a sight, but a sound is a manifestation, an appearance. A sight is not a sound, but a sight is a manifestation, an appearance. A sensations is not a sound, but it is manifestation, appearance. The I AM is likewise just another appearance, it is of the Mind door and therefore you say it is not a sight, not a sound. That I AM or Mind (pure sense of formless Presence-Awareness even when five senses are shut) is formless because it is not visually seen nor auditorily heard (because it is the Mind door, not the visual or auditory sense door) but it is still a manifestation. But it is really just another appearance, a manifestation. You do not say Presence allows appearance, for Presence is just appearances in all its diversities. In other words, Presence has not just one particular face but ten thousand faces."

The view of anatta, dependent origination and emptiness is very different from Advaita, so while you intellectually understand this point, continue to do self enquiry which works on a different set of assumptions. Don't get disturbed by whether Presence is self or not self while doing self enquiry, or on anatta, etc. Just direct realize the

Awareness/Presence/I AM first. If you get disturbed by thinking or concepts, you will never come to the Certainty of Being-Existence. As a matter of fact, that doubtless taste of luminous Presence does not contradict anatta, but complements it when properly understood. Merely understanding anatta without the direct taste of Presence is dry and nihilistic or merely intellectual.

However after you realize Presence (I AM), then non dual, then anatta and dependent origination and emptiness, you will start to see and appreciate that Buddha's view and insight is profound.

John Tan told me in 2008, "Although the 'teaching of anatta' helps to prevent you from landing into wrong views, the downside is it also denies you from experiencing that deep and ultimate conviction, that certainty beyond doubt of your very own existence -- "I AM'. This is a very important factor for Advaita practitioners.

The next important factor is the duration of this non-dual experience must be prolonged; long enough for you to enter into a sort of absorption that the experience becomes 'oceanic'."

Although I had an intellectual understanding of anatta, emptiness and dependent origination since 2006, I (Soh) did not let it disturb my self-enquiry and my self enquiry between 2008 to February 2010 culminated in Self-Realization.

Furthermore, someone just asked me (Soh) about self-enquiry vs noting path.

He asked, "Do you guys recommend self inquiry over mahasi-style noting? If so, why?"

I (Soh) wrote in reply:

"There is something sweet, beautiful and attractive in Awareness teachings even back when I was beginning to explore spirituality in 2004-2006. I was naturally drawn to it. I was also brought to dharma by my mother and took refuge in the triple gems under Venerable Shen Kai whose lineage is the Ch'an tradition. His teachings is heavily Awareness-centered and it resonated with me then. That was also when I first met John and he told me about his insights. I was very happy when I discovered The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle in 2006, which I felt to be a potent book at bringing readers to a direct glimpse and state of Presence. (This is now still my 'starter book' which I pass to my friends and relatives as an introduction to spirituality)

Pure noting would not suit me or my character because it would have felt dry and barren to me. That taste of Presence, a direct taste of Spirit or the Heart seems missing in those practices. Which I was already having glimpses of, as early as 2006-2007 (a few years before doubtless Self-Realization arose)

But through awareness teachings and the practice of self-enquiry when I AM realization arose, all further progressions are based on the maturing of insight in relation to that nondual luminous taste of presence.

However if you are drawn to MCTB approach there is nothing wrong pursuing noting and the path as outlined there. The luminosity aspect is eventually brought forth at the 3rd path of MCTB and matures at 4th and post-4th (Daniel's exploration of AF practices).

You have to gauge and see for yourself which approach you felt more resonance with."

"Soh Wei Yu

Angelo Gerangelo
shared this days ago in his group:
The practices I recommend are usually momentary and arise from the conditions of the interaction at that moment. I do recommend simple meditation / presence practice on a consistent daily basis. You can use a technique or not (shikan taza). Also it's good to develop a sense of when inquiry is most relevant and when practicing no practice is most relevant. This can take some time to hone the intuition, but it's certainly possible. The practice of no-practice is spontaneity, alertness, contact, and innocent regard for momentary flow of life.
A few books I often recommend: Emptiness Dancing, Power of Now, Three Pillars of Zen.
Emotion work such as focusing can be very useful as well.
Jeff Foster talks about acceptance in similar ways to focusing techniques. I like his book The Deepest Acceptance as well.
Any kind of body/energy work such as hatha yoga, qi gong, tai chi also valuable.
Try things and feel into what you resonate with the most. Trust your own innate awake nature, it knows... it got you this far 🙂
That's what's coming to mind currently.

4
Michael Zaurov
To learn focusing I highly recommend the book The Power of Focusing by Ann Weiser Cornell. It's short and practical and gives you all the tools you need for emotional work (which i've found to be very very important for awakening)

3
Angelo Gerangelo
I also added this:
In my experience the most important aspect of your approach to awakening and realization is the commitment to it- not learning about it, understanding it, or even attaching rigidly to specific practices such as meditation. This means an intent and commitment to break through the barriers of what you take yourself to be. If you prioritize that, the right

practices, teachers, and life events will coalesce to deliver it. Trusting in realization, the process itself, trusting the intuition that you aren't here to suffer.
Call it a heart level commitment. It's willingness to go through what you'll have to got through to let reality sort you out, even if you don't like some aspects of it.
Be willing to let go of any beliefs and views you have, even those about spirituality.
This is the price of admission.

3
□ Thomas Arta

Michael Zaurov
yes to Ann Weiser Cornell. Focusing is an incredibly powerful tool. Thanks for mentioning this.

2
□ □ □ Soh Wei Yu
I havent read emptiness dancing, but i can recommend the power of now and three pillars of zen
□ Angelo Gerangelo
Hey Chris. There are very good answers here to your question. I would take all of them into consideration.
Here's something that may or may not be helpful.
It's very common to approach awakening through analytical means initially. Indeed it's almost impossible not to. The fact that you recognize that it's not going to get you where you want to go is more profound than maybe you realize. While it's frustrating, your instinct to go beyond that analytical approach, especially for initial awakening, is right on the money. The good news is that going beyond thought, that will always happen right now. If you think in terms of strategies that will take some time, that's sort of delaying things and not recognizing the opportunity immediately here. For instance when you notice you are contemplating a specific topic about spirituality, whether it's about how you can wake up, what is the best technique, what book should I read etc, even the thought "I'm too logical", THAT is your opportunity! Recognize the fact that you just recognized a thought. The fact that you recognized it as a thought means you aren't identified with it at least in that moment. So then clarify the thought, like speak it internally. "I wish I knew the best book to read about Buddhism" or "I wander what I'm doing something wrong" Doesn't matter the actual thought, just that you clearly see it as a thought.
Now once you do that, you can Inquire in several ways. You can try and see which seem to get traction (meaning lead to a thoughtless state, an awake gap, a living movement in consciousness that is not landing on any thought and yet you are still totally alert). Even if this is for a few seconds, you're on the right track. Keep at it.
So once you are in Contact with that thought here are some inquiry questions. Obviously you aren't looking for a thought answer only experiential. If you find yourself answering with thought that's fine, just recognize that next thought as the point of inquiry and start over.

What is this thought made out of?
Can I come into contact with that thought stuff ?
These two questions can be regarded as if you were watching thoughts like images on a movie screen. It would be as if you are walking closer and closer to that screen like you wanted to see what that light stuff is that's shining on the screen. With a movie screen you could walk right up until it blurs out, try it with a thought. You can even try to turn right around into that source of light.
You can ask:
How would it feel if I never resolved this question or thought? , then look/feel there.
What if stepped off the end of that question/thought and never looked back? Try it
What if I ask and then had no desire to answer bc the answer would be another thought? Where can you look now?
You can ask what is in the gap between this thought and the one right before, then put your attention into that gap and keep it there.
You can ask who is it that wants to resolve this question?
And try to find that one (me) experientially like you dropped a pin on the carpet and you got down on your hands and knees to look👀
You can ask what right HERE is not a concept or a thought?
You can ask what does a thought form IN? Then watch for the next thought to form and then watch it dissipate. What is that medium in which that occurred?
Ask: who's thoughts are these? Then look for that one?

_____
A couple of important points.
One is it's actually not hard to find that gap and even stay in it for a few seconds. What deters most people, is we actually begin to feel uncomfortable if we really work it this, especially at first. You can have an intense physiologic reaction or a fear respond sometimes. Often before we even realize that's what's happening we just get distracted and go do some thing else. So it can be valuable to work past emotional or physiological responses. Meaning just recognize them and let them be but don't let them deter you.
On the contrary it can be "suspiciously" neutral experience without thoughts. At least initially. The thinking mind can't do anything with thoughtless awakeness so it deems it unimportant or even thinks it didn't happen. Don't let that deter you, keep on. It won't stay neutral. Rather, it will remain neutral in one sense, but that opens a very important space for some shifts to occur that you can't think your way into.
Good luck. Let me know if any of that is helpful or need more pointers

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“Regarding whether it is important to go through I AM realization or can we skip to anatta -- John Tan and I and Sim Pern Chong have had differing and evolving opinions about this over the years (I remember Sim Pern Chong saying he thinks people can skip it altogether, John also wondered if it is possible or advisable as certain AF people seem to have skipped it but experience luminosity), however after witnessing the progress of people it seems to us that those who went into anatta without the I AM realization tend to miss out the luminosity and intensity of luminosity. And then they will have to go through another phase. For those with I AM realization, the second stanza of anatta comes very easily, in fact the first aspect to become more apparent. Nowadays John and my opinion is that it is best to go through the I AM phase, then nondual and anatta..

There was also the worry that by leading people into the I AM, they can get stuck there. (As John Tan and Sim Pern Chong was stuck there for decades)

But I have shown that it is possible to progress rather quickly (in eight months) from I AM to anatta. So the being stuck is due to lack of right pointers and directions, not inherently an issue with I AM.” - Soh, 2020

On a related topic, John Tan wrote in Dharma Overground back in 2009,

“Hi Gary,

It appears that there are two groups of practitioners in this forum, one adopting the gradual approach and the other, the direct path. I am quite new here so I may be wrong.

My take is that you are adopting a gradual approach yet you are experiencing something very significant in the direct path, that is, the ‘Watcher’. As what Kenneth said, “You're onto something very big here, Gary. This practice will set you free.” But what Kenneth said would require you to be awaken to this ‘I’. It requires you to have the ‘eureka!’ sort of realization. Awaken to this ‘I’, the path of spirituality becomes clear; it is simply the unfolding of this ‘I’.

On the other hand, what that is described by Yabaxoule is a gradual approach and therefore there is downplaying of the ‘I AM’. You have to gauge your own conditions, if you choose the direct path, you cannot downplay this ‘I’; contrary, you must fully and completely experience the whole of ‘YOU’ as ‘Existence’. Emptiness nature of our pristine nature will step in for the direct path practitioners when they come face to face to the ‘traceless’, ‘centerless’ and ‘effortless’ nature of non-dual awareness.

Perhaps a little on where the two approaches meet will be of help to you.

Awakening to the ‘Watcher’ will at the same time ‘open’ the ‘eye of immediacy’; that is, it is the capacity to immediately penetrate discursive thoughts and sense, feel, perceive without intermediary the perceived. It is a kind of direct knowing. You must be deeply aware of this “direct without intermediary” sort of perception -- too direct to have subject-object gap, too short to have time, too simple to have thoughts. It is the ‘eye’ that can see the whole of ‘sound’ by being ‘sound’.

It is the same ‘eye’ that is required when doing vipassana, that is, being ‘bare’. Be it non-dual or vipassana, both require the opening of this 'eye of immediacy'.”

“2007:
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../normal-0-false... -

Thusness: Ok, there are two things you must know. In the three (or four) dharma seals, the universal seals (characteristics of existence), there is the understanding of no-self, there is impermanence, there is suffering and there is nirvana. Entering from the door of impermanence is different from entering the door of no-self.
Participant 1: If I observe how the thoughts behave and realise it from there?
Thusness: Now you see, there are two things. One thing is that when you observe the arising and the passing away of the moment. Of every arising of your thoughts. When you observe the arising and passing away, it can also lead to the understanding of no-self, but from the door of impermanence. This means that Self is seen as a series: Self1, Self2, Self3, that does not remain, from moment to moment it changes. You see what I mean?
Participant 1: Yep.
Thusness: However, a person that enters through the door of no-self, means understanding no-self directly, he enters through luminosity. That is more like a mirror bright, but he cannot understand the luminosity due to momentum, then he separates the external world and the internal world. But the no-self itself will break this mirror, then he will see that everything is the Mind. Do you get it? One is from the luminosity door. No-self leads to the mirror bright, and then breaking the mirror and then experience everything as the nature. The other one that leads to no-self is through the understanding of impermanence.
Participant 1: {inaudible}
Thusness: Ok. Now, the understanding of these two is important, it must later be fused into one to understand what Emptiness about. This means there is no point of reference, there is no centricity, there is no where, there is no when, there is no I, but there is manifestation all and everywhere. If you enter the gate of impermanence, later you have to experience no-self from luminosity, then you have to fuse the two, then you have to stabilise the two, then you can understand Emptiness.
Participant 1: It’s like, I tend to want to see and perceive things without concept through the door of the mantra, the momentum. How does that relate?
Thusness: If you want to do that, you are going into mindfulness. That means you are slowly from impermanence seeing that things arises and ceases, leading to no-self, and then leading you to insight. That is the luminosity aspect already.”

For those interested in Vipassana practice, see chapter **Vipassana, John Tan’s Style** but keep in mind that the luminosity, and luminous manifestation needs to be brought out.

2006 Conversations with Thusness:

(10:41 PM) John: AMness to no-self, no-self to emptiness, spontaneous arising
(10:41 PM) John: this must be the steps
(10:42 PM) AEN: icic
(10:42 PM) John: it is no good to skip level
(10:42 PM) AEN: oic
(10:42 PM) John: cause there will be no true understanding.
(10:42 PM) AEN: icic
(10:44 PM) AEN: is AMness a stage tat all buddhists also go through?
(10:44 PM) John: nope...but it is better to go through...i think it is a very important stage. 🙂
(10:45 PM) AEN: icic
(10:45 PM) AEN: how come important?
(10:46 PM) John: without no-self as a yuan, it is really difficult to go beyond AMness and refine our experience and understanding of pristine awareness
(10:46 PM) AEN: oic
(10:46 PM) John: i do not know how to if one did not come into contact with buddhism doctrine of no-self and emptiness
(10:47 PM) John: it is very very subtle
(10:47 PM) AEN: icic
(10:47 PM) John: even one has entered the stream, it still require quite a period for one to stabilize the experience. 🙂
(10:47 PM) AEN: oic
(10:48 PM) John: but mindfulness can lead directly to no-self
(10:48 PM) AEN: icic
(10:48 PM) John: without going through AMness
(10:48 PM) AEN: oic
(10:48 PM) John: I AMness is a mystical path.
(10:48 PM) AEN: shamatha can lead to amness?
(10:49 PM) AEN: icic
(10:49 PM) John: yes but a person if has the correct "yuan" entering into "AMness" will know the No-Self is the way and the correct path.
(10:50 PM) AEN: oic
(10:50 PM) John: it is like finding the correct medicine for a disease....when one taste it, one will know...
(10:50 PM) AEN: icic
(10:50 PM) John: one will know it is the next stage when one experience
(10:51 PM) John: and when no-self is stabilized, one knows about emptiness is the next stage
(10:51 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:52 PM) John: and spontaneous arising though is experienced in each and every stage, one after thorough understanding, one knows that after the purification of no-self and emptiness, it can then be considered the real experience of unconditioned arising...the still water flows...(i like this description)
(10:52 PM) AEN: icic
(10:54 PM) John: you may want to ask longchen himself. 🙂
(10:54 PM) John: it is like a medicine for "I AMness"
(10:54 PM) AEN: ask him about ?
(10:54 PM) AEN: icic
(10:55 PM) John: it is like the natural progression for the next stage

.....
(12:08 AM) John: it is okie to tok about the One Mind. 🙂
(12:09 AM) John: i tell you this is because i don't want you to think that "I AMness" is wrong.
(12:09 AM) AEN: oic
(12:09 AM) John: it is a natural progression.
(12:09 AM) AEN: icic
(12:10 AM) John: you must also realised that even if one get trained to quite a high stage in mindfulness in sensing and being present, he is unable to fuse into everything
(12:10 AM) AEN: how come?
(12:11 AM) John: but if he experience "I AMness" and go into mindfulness, his progress will be more thorough and profound.
(12:11 AM) John: his understanding will be deeper.
(12:11 AM) John: because he will struggle between the source and no-self and emptiness until true understanding arise
(12:11 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:12 AM) John: from "I AMness" to experiencing presence, one must know anatta and emptiness
(12:13 AM) John: but when when go directly into anatta, one cannot really appreciate...this is what i find out after reading so much books by great meditator.
(12:14 AM) John: why?
(12:14 AM) John: because of the cultural setting
(12:14 AM) John: india has a very strong cultural background on the 'Self'
(12:14 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:15 AM) John: so many great mystics if given the yuan when they experience no-self knows the depth
(12:15 AM) AEN: icic..
(12:15 AM) John: this you must be aware.
(12:16 AM) John: that is why i sense his condition for breaking-through no-self is pretty strong.
(12:16 AM) John: but his yuan in buddhism is strong.
(12:16 AM) John: unlike bob. 😛
(12:16 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:16 AM) AEN: how you know bob no yuan with buddhism? lol
....
(7:03 PM) John: actually it is important to experience the "I AMness"
(7:03 PM) AEN: oic..
(7:04 PM) John: i find that people having such experiences have more profound understanding of the teaching of Buddha if they are able to humble themselves down.
(7:04 PM) AEN: oic
(7:04 PM) John: Because these are the people that are in the best position to tell if they go beyond that stage...
(7:04 PM) John: it is a natural progression.
(7:04 PM) John: and Buddha I would say knows this problem and is one that has gone through similar process.

Sim Pern Chong

Admin

Yah... going through I AM stage first before realising No-self.. will provide greater depth to the No-self insight.

Reply

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One more quote, this one from 2010:
(4:39:30 PM) Thusness: if you do not see the cause of 'division', can there be non-dual and anatta experience? without the experience of "I AMness", your experience of non-dual and anatta will be different.
(4:40:37 PM) AEN: oic
(4:40:38 PM) AEN: how different
(4:40:58 PM) Thusness: very different in terms of intensity and realization. most will skew towards first stanza. the directness and immediacy is also different. the experience will re-surface if you practice non-dual dropping, but not by way of one-pointedness concentration
(Also related: Pellucid No-Self, Non-Doership https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../pellucid-no-self... , The Importance of Luminosity https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../the-importance-of...)

Other Questions on Self-Enquiry and I AM

"Someone asked, *"Clarification on the practice of koan/hua-tou/self inquiry.*
Is the emphasis, the focus, placed on the moment before the koan is asked, or is it placed on the doubt/inquisitiveness that arises by asking the koan, or both?
Reading Xu Yun, it seems that the practice is to create as much doubt as possible and looking into that doubt that arises from the questioning? There are some other descriptions however that state that to be a hua-tou the focus/looking-into should be done in that moment before the thought arises?"

Soh replied, "In Self Enquiry, I asked "Before birth, Who am I?"

The point of self enquiry is really to investigate (and this process of investigation consists of an earnest curiosity and inquisitiveness) and direct the mind to the Source. The Source which is prior to everything - thoughts, perceptions, etc. So that That which is what you truly are, the I AM prior to "I am this" or "I am that", can be directly realized in complete certainty without a trace of doubt.

Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I AM". That I AM that I AM is what's present five millenias ago, present five minutes ago, present Now, present before the koan is asked, in fact the original face before your parents were born, before the big bang, before time and space, before everything perceivable and conceivable.

The purpose of generating doubt is not to create endless doubt but to direct the mind to the Source so that the very doubt resolves into the Doubtless Self/Beingness that is revealed in its shining radiance.

The doubt is itself the inquisitiveness and curiosity (an important key element to successful self-enquiry - otherwise the thought 'Who am I?' will just be a monotonous and robotic mental chanting like a mantra rather than lead the mind to

the Source) to really find out the truth of your Being. You have to ask "Who am I?" like you really, really mean it, like you really, really want to find out what you truly are at the core of your Being and unlock the secret of Existence. Like, what the hell, after all these years living on this planet, what is at the core of this wondrous Life itself? What is this Existence? What am I??? I've seen many things in life and lived for so many years, but WHO is living this Life? Who is seeing, hearing, smelling? Who is dragging this corpse along? That's the meaning of doubt, nothing else.

To use an analogy of Ramana Maharshi, the doubt is the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre, to be finally dissolved in the end (into the Source).

"The mind will subside only by means of the enquiry 'Who am I?'. The thought 'Who am I?', destroying all other thoughts, will itself finally be destroyed like the stick used for stirring the funeral pyre." - Ramana Maharshi""

Someone else asked, "*Why is "before birth, what am I?" being advocated? Why would we assume we were anything "before birth"?*"

Soh replied, "Before any observable five senses or conceptual phenomena, what are you? There is a doubtless Presence before senses. But don't intellectualize the question or ponder conceptually while enquiring. The purpose of self-enquiry is to have a direct non-conceptual realization of Self/Presence, so any conceptual rumination will be an obstruction during the practice of self-enquiring.

"*When the Body Disappears.*

Remember "con men," "con women" as well. These con men can sell you anything! There's one living in your mind right now, and you believe every word he says! His name is Thinking. When you let go of that inner talk and get silent, you get happy. Then when you let go of the movement of the mind and stay with the breath, you experience even more delight. Then when you let go of the body ,all these five senses disappear and you're really blissing out. This is original Buddhism. Sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch completely vanish. This is like being in a sensory deprivation chamber but much better. But it's not just silence, you just don't hear anything. It's not just blackness, you just don't see anything. It's not just a feeling of comfort in the body, there is no body at all.

When the body disappears that really starts to feel great. You know of all those people who have out of the body experiences? When the body dies, every person has that experience, they float out of the body. And one of the things they always say is it's so peaceful, so beautiful, so blissful. It's the same in meditation when the body disappears, it's so peaceful, so beautiful, so blissful when you are free from this body. What's left? Here there's no sight, sound, smell, taste, touch. This is what the Buddha called the mind in deep meditation. When the body disappears what is left is the mind.

I gave a simile to a monk the other night. Imagine an Emperor who is wearing a long pair of trousers and a big tunic. He's got shoes on his feet, a scarf around the bottom half of his head and a hat on the top half of his head. You can't see him at all because he's completely covered in five garments. It's the same with the mind. It's completely covered with sight, sound, smell,

taste and touch. So people don't know it. They just know the garments. When they see the Emperor, they just see the robes and the garments. They don't know who lives inside them. And so it is no wonder they're confused about what is life, what is mind, who is this inside of here, where did I come from? Why? What am I supposed to be doing with this life? When the five senses disappear, it's like unclothing the Emperor and seeing what is actually in here, what's actually running the show, who's listening to these words, who's seeing, who's feeling life, who this is. When the five senses disappear, you're coming close to the answer to those questions.

What you're seeing in such deep meditation is that which we call "mind," (in Pali it's called Citta). The Buddha used this beautiful simile. When there is a full moon on a cloudy night, even though it's a full moon, you can hardly see it. Sometimes when the clouds are thin, you can see this hazy shape shining though. You know there is something there. This is like the meditation just before you've entered into these profound states. You know there is something there, but you can't quite make it out. There's still some "clothes" left. You're still thinking and doing, feeling the body or hearing sounds. But there does come a time, and this is the Buddha's simile, when the moon is released from the clouds and there in the clear night sky you can see the beautiful full disc of the moon shining brilliantly, and you know that's the moon. The moon is there; the moon is real, and it's not just some sort of side effect of the clouds. This is what happens in meditation when you see the mind. You see clearly that the mind is not some side effect of the brain. You see the mind, and you know the mind. The Buddha said that the mind released is beautiful, is brilliant, is radiant. So not only are these blissful experiences, they're meaningful experiences as well.

How many people may have heard about rebirth but still don't really believe it? How can rebirth happen? Certainly the body doesn't get reborn. That's why when people ask me where do you go when you die, "one of two places" I say "Fremantle or Karrakatta" that's where the body goes! [3] But is that where the mind goes? Sometimes people are so stupid in this world, they think the body is all there is, that there is no mind. So when you get cremated or buried that's it, that's done with, all has ended. The only way you can argue with this view is by developing the meditation that the Buddha achieved under the Bodhi tree. Then you can see the mind for yourself in clear awareness - not in some hypnotic trance, not in dullness - but in the clear awareness. This is knowing the mind

Knowing the Mind.

When you know that mind, when you see it for yourself, one of the results will be an insight that the mind is independent of this body. Independence means that when this body breaks up and dies, when it's cremated or when it's buried, or however it's destroyed after death, it will not affect the mind. You know this because you see the nature of the mind. That mind which you see will transcend bodily death. The first thing which you will see for yourself, the insight which is as clear as the nose on your face, is that there is something more to life than this physical body that we take to be me. Secondly you can recognise that that mind, essentially, is no different than that process of consciousness which is in all beings. Whether it's human beings or animals or even insects, of any gender, age or race, you see that that which is in common to all life is this mind, this consciousness, the source of doing.

Once you see that, you have much more respect for your fellow beings. Not just respect for your own race, your own tribe or your own religion, not just for human beings, but for all beings. It's a wonderfully high-minded idea. "May all beings be happy and well and may we respect all nations, all peoples, even all beings." However this is how you achieve that! You truly get compassion only when we see that others are fundamentally just as ourselves. If you think that a cow is completely different from you, that cows don't think like human beings, then it's easy to eat one. But can you eat your grandmother? She's too much like you. Can you eat an ant? Maybe you'd kill an ant because you think that ants aren't like you. But if you look carefully at ants, they are no different. In a forest monastery living out in the bush, close to nature, one of the things you become so convinced of is that animals have emotions and , especially, feel pain. You begin to recognise the personality of the animals, of the Kookaburras,(Australian bird) of the mice, the ants, and the spiders. Each one of those spiders has a mind just like you have. Once you see that you can understand the Buddha's compassion for all beings. You can also understand how rebirth can occur between all species - not just human beings to human beings, but animals to humans, humans to animals. You can understand also how the mind is the source of all this."

- Ajahn Brahmavamso, https://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:p0B7NPPnQBsJ:https://www.budsas.org/ebud/ebmed065.htm+&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&gl=sg "

However, it should be noted that it is not necessary to enter certain states of meditation to shut off the five senses before realizing I AM. As Ramana Maharshi said before, it is not necessary to lose body consciousness to realise Self, although doing so simply intensifies the samadhi or absorption in Self.

*"**Right now, as you read this,** you exist and you are aware that you exist. You are undoubtedly present and aware. Before the next thought arises, you are absolutely certain of the fact of your own being, your own awareness, your own presence. This awareness is what you are; it is what you always have been. All thoughts, perceptions, sensations and feelings appear within or upon that. This awareness does not move, change or shift at any time. It is always free and completely untouched. However, it is not a thing or an object that you can see or grasp. The mind, being simply thoughts arising in awareness, cannot grasp it or know it or even think about it. Yet, as Bob says, you cannot deny the fact of your own being. It is palpably obvious, and yet, from the time we were born, no one has pointed this out. Once it is pointed out it can be grasped or understood very quickly because it is just a matter of noticing, 'Oh, that is what I am!' It is a bright, luminous, empty, presence of awareness; it is absolutely radiant, yet without form; it is seemingly intangible, but the most solid fact in your existence; it is effortlessly here right now, forever untouched. Without taking a step, you have arrived; you are home. No practice can reveal this because practices are in time and in the mind. Practices aim at a result, but you (as presence-awareness) are here already, only you don't recognize it till it is pointed out. Once seen, you can't lose it, and you don't have to practice to exist, to be. This is, in essence, what Bob pointed out to me in the first conversation I had with him.*

***Once I saw this,** I felt very clear and free immediately. Later, some thoughts came up, some old personality patterns, some old definitions of who I thought myself to be. I seemed to lose the clear understanding of my nature as presence-awareness. The next day, I talked to Bob about it. He said, 'Let's have a look. Do you exist? Are you aware? What is illumining the thought that you have lost it?' Then I realized that thoughts of suffering were only passing concepts being*

illumined by the ever-present awareness. I hadn't lost anything at all. The awareness that we are is never obscured! Suffering seems real because we don't have a clear understanding of our true nature. Instead, we believe the passing thoughts, such as 'I am no good,' 'I am not there yet,' 'I am stuck' or whatever the thought may be. Eventually we understand that we are not those thoughts. Once our real self is pointed out, the suffering loses its grip.

Bob pointed out that there is no person here at all. *The person that we think we are is an imaginary concept. There are thoughts and feelings and perceptions, but they are not a problem. They just rise and fall like dust motes in the light of the presence-awareness that we are.*

The closest that the mind *can come to representing who we are is the thought 'I am'. But that thought is not who we really are. Whether that thought is there or not, we still exist. We know the thought 'I am'. That thought is the start of the false sense of an individual, a separate 'I'. Because we didn't know any better, the mind attached other labels to this 'I' thought, such as 'I am good,' 'I am bad,' 'I have this problem,' and so on. But those thoughts don't have anything to do with us, because the very 'I' thought itself, the sense of separation, is not actually who we are. Once you see the falseness of the 'I' thought, that what we are is not an individual person at all, the identifications and ideas of a lifetime all collapse because they are all based on a false premise."* - John Wheeler, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2026/02/awakening-to-natural-state-by-john.html

Likewise, another practitioner by the name of Wayne has described this realization of I AMness:

http://waynedhamma.blogspot.com/2007/02/original-face.html

"The Original Face

What is the Original Face? It is the face all of us have before our parents gave birth to us. Before we even have the 6 sense organs of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body & brain to perceive the 6 sense objects of form, sound, smell, taste, feeling & thought. Before we even know good & evil, happiness & suffering, samsara & nirvana. Simply the pure awareness untainted by all 6 senses - that is the real YOU. That is also me, that is also all sentient beings & all Buddhas.

This is the Dharma that the 6th Patriarch revealed to his pursuer Hui Ming on Da Yu mountain. By temporarily shutting down your 6 sense organs and blocking out the 6 sense objects, by abandoning duality, what is left at that instant is your true nature. Like the still lake without a single ripple, or like the clear blue sky without a single cloud; the original face is vast, limitless, formless & completely free. It is not dull nothingness like an unconscious person, but a living, unmoving awareness that pervades all things, yet remaining unaffected by all things. Besides this, there is no other esoteric teachings that the Buddha & the Patriarches can impart to us.

But alas, for all of us, after we have picked up a physical body in our mother's womb, we have totally forgotten our original face. We started to grasp on to our sense organs, believing that to be our Self, our Ego. This is where the ignorance without a beginning - Avijja takes over. When our sense organs contact the sense objects, we instinctively allow the objects to enslave the

organs, such that craving & aversion develops without an end, engulfing the entire universe. From Avijja arises craving & aversion, & from craving & aversion arises endless suffering.

Thus realizing this, the Zen practitioner should, in a single thought understand his or her own mistake, & immediately detach oneself from one's senses & its objects from within. Throwing away all concepts, directly penetrate the veil of Avijja & recover your original face. This is the common hope of all Buddhas & Patriarches for all sentient beings. Let none of us disappoint them, sadhu."

Someone asked,

"Is it possible to achieve stream entry with bipolar disorder? I've been recently diagnosed and it has heavily discouraged me from continuing my practice. Is there any hope? I've yet to learn about anyone with this disorder who has achieved higher insights."

Kyle Dixon replied,

"I don't see why not. Stream entry involves recognition of the true nature of the clear, bright, knowing, cognizance of your mind.
As your practice progresses you should begin to familiarize with that knowing capacity. Even with bipolar, in the height of happiness, the depths of depression, in the intensity of anger, that knowing capacity is always the same, stable, bright, clear. Like the surface of a mirror.
Anger, sadness, happiness and everything else are like reflections that appear in the surface of the mirror but don't affect it.
Be the mirror and don't get caught up in the reflections.
This is not yet stream entry. But it can be a basis for practice that will help you get there.
...

In initial practice, if you treat your knowing conscious clarity of mind as something like the surface of a mirror, and the sensory stimuli as reflections that appear on the mirror, anchor your view as being the mirror and the view will always be stable no matter what appears."
Aditya Prasad
Soh Wei Yu I don't understand this quote. "Stream entry is X. This is not yet stream entry." I think I am misunderstanding which parts describe stream entry and which do not. Is the distinction here the same as initial rigpa vs mature rigpa (= stream entry)? Kyle Dixon · 49m

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Aditya Prasad
Kyle Dixon is saying that recognising the clarity aspect of rigpa is not stream entry but is an important preliminary realisation. Realising the empty nature (i.e. anatman) of that clarity of mind is stream entry.

Warning by Soh: those with serious mental conditions should read this before practicing - Can Schizophrenics (and people with other mental illnesses) Practice? - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/12/can-schizophrenics-practice.html

Someone asked, *"I often hear people saying that more than a decade has passed between the I AM realization and the subsequent ones. It's very often between 10 and 20 years. Does that mean that there's a sort of maturation process happening very slowly after the first realization? I just wonder if I'm stuck or whether I will make progress"*

I (Soh) said,

"Yes it is common for people to get stuck at I AM for 10-20 years, that's the case for John and many others. But for me, it took me only 8 months from initial I AM realization to anatta. This is because I had pointers from John. It is possible to progress much faster and avoid dangerous pitfalls and sidetracks when there are certain pointers and directions, and I think this blog will quicken your progress."

The same person realized I AM but was facing this issue,

"Though I sort of do feel stuck right now, I have difficulty finding interest in anything, including spiritual matters. I find that everything is hollow and without meaning, and for some reason I keep settling into a sort of zombie mode where I just do things automatically without really caring. It doesn't feel right, but I don't have the willpower or energy needed to get myself out of it.
I don't know if this sounds familiar, is this also just a stage, or have I gone wrong somewhere along the way?"

I (Soh) said,

"In my blog the latest post on book recommendations there is a link to the Four Aspects of I Am and in it one of it is the intensity of luminosity. And I put an article there describing the intensity of luminosity. You should practice that and the joy will come. You will marvel at the aliveness of simple things like the blueness of the sky, the colours of flowers and having a simple meal, the tastes. Everything becomes imbued with a sense of magnificence and significance and awe, rather than dullness and meaninglessness. If you realized The I Am then you should practice all four aspects and do the Two Types of Nondual Contemplation. That is the way to progress.

It is also possible to fall into the dark nights in the I Am phase like what happened to Suzanne Segal (or: some form of dissociation, depersonalization or derealization - though these also depends on factors like one's personal history and

childhood traumas). The Four Aspects of I AM and Two Types of Nondual Contemplation after I AM leading to nondual insight is the remedy
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/dark-night.html "

On the other hand, not all such problems are “spiritual dark nights” but may be related to other personal issues, depressions, so on and so forth. In this case, consider seeking expert advice from various fields, not limited to spirituality - it can be in terms of psychology, psychiatry, health, yoga and energy practices, etc.

Also relevant are some of the old comments by John Tan in 2006/2007 on dark nights:

"Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Thusness:
25 Jan `07, 2:47PM
(commenting on some of Suzanne Segal's descriptions) If someone draws a line in the thin air and is able to plant a seed into a lay person’s inmost consciousness that “he can’t go beyond this line”, that lay person will feel that the so called ‘imaginary’ boundary is as solid as a physical wall. The way we are ‘bonded’ to dualistic view of a ‘Self’ is similar. A strong sense of Witnessing Presence without going beyond that "invisible line" is not the experience of “no-self” in Buddhism and therefore I would not call her experience an “insight” into no-self. The negative experiences she had seem more like very strong ‘self/Self’ propensities, it is a form of split, a separation.

Staying in no-self is to be fully authenticated by all things and as all things. Fear arises because of this lack of authentication. She sank too deeply into the 'content'. This is the case of "dark nights" where propensities rushed into manifestations. Her attempt to reason herself out will not work. Logical reasoning cannot break that 'bond' and she just couldn't help reacting to it.

One way out is to practice and develop the mental habit of "dissolving" every moment before "content" arise. The mental habit of dissolving will become a strength of it own to counter this problem.
In true no-self experience, the first aspect is the cognitive mind loses its charm and is replaced with intuitive and direct experience. Only the qualities of our nature are experienced (clarity, radiance, presence and vitality), nothing about symbols, labels and content. Second, the illusionary view of a "Self' on top of manifestation is dissolved; There is complete rest in appearance. Nothing needs be done and therefore there can only be the experience of liberation as that boundary, that separation disappeared. Nothing is obstructing anything in the experience of no-self.
Edited by Thusness 25 Jan `07, 11:57PM

· Reply
· 2d

Charlie Birns

Author
Soh Wei Yu
Thank you Soh very helpful.

· Reply
· 2d

Write a reply...

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Also John Tan experienced dark nights which I didn't go through or not that I noted:
https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2013/12/part-2-of-early-forum-posts-by-thusness_3.html
"Yes, the thinking mind will mistake the "Eternal Witness" as the ultimate. Smile If without the correct insight and understanding of our emptiness nature, somehow the thinking mind is able to 'sway' the experience into thinking 'No-Self' as the absence of personality and ego. It is this 'personality' or Ego, the totality of all our cultural makeup, that does not exist; but that Reality behind all forms, thinking, mental formations and feelings is very real; it is the ultimate background of all existence. This is false and in Buddhism, this is the "big Self" that should be eliminated through the experience of non-duality (anatta). Our pristine nature is not what the linear mode of reasoning can understanding. However "seeing in raw" does not necessarily lead to the experience of true non-duality; the experience of "AMness" is also a very crucial condition. Together with the realization of 'the sense of self is not the doer of action' , then the conditions are ready. They are all part of the progress. 😊

The dark nights described by Dharma Dan are very real for many reasons but then it still depends on one's conditions. I experienced most of the problems. It took me more than 9 months to overcome them. This self-claim Arahat is truly experienced, he has all my respects! All is still due to the propensities of the "Self', they are working at a very subtle level. It is not detectable at the conscious level and it is for this that I must commend you for not being misled by the non-dual experience. You are mindful that the karmic patterns still hover around. This is very important. Deeper insight must come from understanding how consciousness works. It is not at the conscious level alone. So deep are these propensities then even with the non-dual experience that is so clear and vivid, the propensities still persist and manifest from moment to moment. They do not go even after death. It is these patterns that we must be aware. Once rooted, they cannot be easily overcome. The antidote is to habituate the non-dual insight deep down into our consciousness. Do not push yourself too hard but make more regular meditations. It is not easy to submerge entirely into the luminous-bliss of arising and dissolving from moment to moment in day to day working life. Though you can't completely fuse the experience into daily working life, you will still be authenticated.

Saw some of your posts in other forums. Not many will understand your experience even in the mystic circle, just let it be. Happy Journey. :)" – John Tan, 2006

Another person said, *"I'm curious what was the drive for you to look any deeper? I seem to be content where I am..and it seems to be that a certain level of discontentment would need to be present in order to want to go further. What are your thoughts?"*

I (Soh) replied, "Once the I AM is realized, I'm guided by the taste of a pure, original, primordial, non-conceptual and non-dual luminous state of existence.

To bring it into natural, effortless, full-blown spontaneous perfection and intensity in all experience, manifestation, activities, the way I found out (thankfully not very long process due to pointers by John) is through deepening of insights into nondual, anatta and emptiness."

"All those are about I AM and the rank of apparent within the real. (See: Five Ranks of Tozan https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/02/tozan-ryokais-verses-on-five-ranks.html) After the initial realization, I AM becomes stagnant water as one becomes fixed on a dead Absolute. This is where Zen Master Hakuin criticised about an evil spirit watching over the corpse and being stuck in stagnant waters.

Anatta realisation is different, it sees through the view that an ultimate background exists and everything - the myriad forms are the bright radiance of buddha nature, the real in the apparent" - Soh, 2020

"Awareness aware of itself soon becomes dead...lol. The measure of one's depth is in the ineffability and marvelous manifestation in activity. Anatta and emptiness cannot be dead." – John Tan, 2013

"The sense of 'Self' must dissolve in all entry and exit points. In the first stage of dissolving, the dissolving of 'Self' relates only to the thought realm. The entry is at the mind level. The experience is the 'AMness'. Having such experience, a practitioner might be overwhelmed by the transcendental experience, attached to it and mistaken it as the purest stage of consciousness, not realizing that it is only a state of 'no-self' relating to the thought realm." - John Tan, decade+ ago

"The direct realization of Mind is formless, soundless, smell-less, odourless, etc. But later on it is realised that forms, smells, odours, are Mind, are Presence, Luminosity. Without deeper realisation, one just stagnates in the I AM level and get fixated on the formless, etc. That is Thusness Stage 1.

The I-I or I AM is later realised to be simply one aspect or 'sense gate' or 'door' of pristine consciousness. It is later seen to be not any more special or ultimate than a color, a sound, a sensation, a smell, a touch, a thought, all of which reveals its vibrant aliveness and luminosity. The same taste of I AM is now extended to all senses. Right now you don't feel that, you only authenticated the luminosity of the Mind/thought door. So your emphasis is on the formless, odourless, and so on. After anatta it is different, everything is of the same luminous, empty taste.

And the 'I AM' of the mind door is not any more different than any other sense door, it is only different in that it is a 'different' manifestation of differing conditions just like a sound is different from a sight, a smell is different from a touch. Sure, the Mind door is odourless, but that's not any different from saying the vision door is odourless and the sound door is sensationless. It doesn't imply some sort of hierarchy or ultimacy of one mode of knowingness over another. They are simply different sense gates but equally luminous and empty, equally Buddha-nature." – Soh, 2020

"When consciousness experiences the pure sense of "I AM", overwhelmed by the transcendental thoughtless moment of Beingness, consciousness clings to that experience as its purest identity. By doing so, it subtly creates a 'watcher' and fails to see that the 'Pure Sense of Existence' is nothing but an aspect of pure consciousness relating to the thought realm. This in turn serves as the karmic condition that prevents the experience of pure consciousness that arises from other sense-objects. Extending it to the other senses, there is hearing without a hearer and seeing without a seer -- the experience of Pure Sound-Consciousness is radically different from Pure Sight-Consciousness. Sincerely, if we are able to give up 'I' and replace it with "Emptiness Nature", Consciousness is experienced as non-local. There isn't a state that is purer than the other. All is just One Taste, the manifold of Presence.

The 'who', 'where' and 'when', the 'I', 'here' and 'now' must ultimately give way to the experience of total transparency. Do not fall back to a source, just the manifestation is sufficient. This will become so clear that total transparency is experienced. When total transparency is stabilized, transcendental body is experienced and dharmakaya is seen everywhere. This is the samadhi bliss of Bodhisattva. This is the fruition of practice." – John Tan, 2006, 3) Buddha Nature is NOT "I Am"

"LongChen has experienced the pure Presence to a certain level. :) LongChen [Sim Pern Chong] will not easily summit himself/herself to a master. He has reached a certain level of attainment.

Do not belittle what he [Sim Pern Chong] experiences. Pure sense of existence is most sacred. It is difficult to develop penetrating insight into the different layers of consciousness. To go beyond the "I AM" is rare. :) It's a lonely journey. I told you it will be a struggle for him. Because he will not easily submit himself now to a master. :)

The True Buddha Nature is the Pure Presence, however when the mind attempts to grasp its essence after its initial experience, it creatively creates the "I AM". An Entity having all the properties of, yet still stubbornly attached to the "I'. It is the tricks of the monkey mind's unwillingness to let go yet trying to recapture the Pure Presence experience. As such when it turns inwards to break layer by layer of its own boundaries, it will have all these hurdles to clear.

It is too subtle to differentiate the I AM from Thusness. :) Eliminate the I from "I AM", AMness has no meaning without "I". Isness itself is sufficient. :) True Presence must be experienced not only in the ghost within. It is in the air, the tick of the click.. etc. My short mesage in the forum has defined the path he will travel. Anyway it will take many years. :)" - John Tan, 2004

“In lesser than a year, he [Sim Pern Chong] will break through [into anatta]. But he must extend it to the rest of the 5 senses, and experience it in clarity. :)” – Accurate prediction by John Tan, January 2006

After the maturity of anatta insight and twofold emptiness (which will be discussed later in this document), eventually there is effortless, ongoing and intense experience of "everything as Self", "As in that experience of I AM powerfully present at this moment", "As if like Awareness clear and open like space, without meditation yet powerfully present and non-dual. Where the 4 Aspects of I AM are fully experienced in this moment. This experience will become more and more powerful later yet effortless and uncontrived. How so? If it is not correct insights and practice, how is it possible for such complete and total experience of effortless and uncontrived Presence be possible?". "Indeed and this is being authenticated by the immediate moment of experience. How could there be doubt about it. The last trace of Presence must be released with seeing through the emptiness nature of whatever arises. After maturing and integrating your insights into practice, there must be no effort and action.... The entire whole is doing the work and arises as this vivid moment of shimmering appearance, this has always been what we always called Presence." "Yes and you should in all moment of 6 entries and exits experience all coming together for this moment to arise....this will dissolve all senses of holdings and will lead you effortless and maha experience of suchness effortlessly", "interpenetration, open, boundless, effortless and uncontrived." (John, 2012)

“So this experience is not a normal experience, correct? I mean, within the probably 15 years of my life or 17 years of my life, my first... when I was 17, when you first experienced that, wah, what is that? So, it is something different, it is non conceptual, it is non dual, and all these. But it is very difficult to get back the experience. Very, very difficult, unless you're in when you're in meditation, because you reject the relative, the appearances. So, it is, although they may say no, no, it is always with me, because it's Self, correct? But you don't actually get back the authentication, just pure sense of existence, just me, because you reject the rest of that appearances, but you do not know during that time. Only after anatta, then you realize that this, when you when you hear sound without the background, that experience is exactly the same, the taste is exactly the same as the presence. The I AM Presence. So, only after anatta, when the background is gone, then you realize eh, this has the exact same taste as the I AM experience. When you are not hearing, you are just in the vivid appearances, the obvious appearances now, correct. That experience is also the I AM experience. When you are even now feeling your sensation without the sense of self directly. That experience is exactly the same as I AM taste. It is nondual. Then you realize, I call, actually, everything is Mind. Correct? Everything. So, so before that, there is an ultimate Self, a background, and you reject all those transient appearances. After that, that background is gone, you know? And then you are just all these appearances.

William Lam: You are the appearance? You are the sound? You are the...

John Tan: Yes. So, so, that is an experience. That is an experience. So after that, you realize something. What did you realise? You realise all along it is the what, that is obscuring you. So... in a person, for a person that is in I AM experience, the pure presence experience, they will always have a dream. They will say that I hope I can 24 by 7 always in that state, correct? So when I was young, 17. But then after 10 years you are still thinking. Then after 20 years, you say how come I need to always meditate? You always find time to meditate, maybe I don't study also meditate, you give me a cave last time I will just meditate inside.

So, the the thing that you always dream that you can one day be pure consciousness, just as pure consciousness, live as pure consciousness, but you never get it. And even if you meditate, occasionally probably you can have that oceanic experience. Only when you after anatta, when that self behind is gone, you are not 24 by 7, maybe most of your day, waking state, not so much of 24 by 7, you dream that time still very karmic depending on what you engage, doing business, all these. (John mimics dreaming) How come ah, the business...

So, so, in normal waking state, you are effortless. Probably that is the, during I AM phase, what you think you are going to achieve, you achieve after the insight of anatta. So you become clear, you are probably in the right path. But there are further insights you have to go through. When you try to penetrate the... one of them is, I feel that I become very physical. I am just narrating, going through my experience. Maybe that time... because you experience the relative, the appearances directly. So everything becomes very physical. So that is how you come to understand the meaning, how concepts actually affect you. Then what exactly is physical? How does the idea of physical come about, correct? That time I still do not know about emptiness, and all these kind of things, to me it is not so important.

So, I start going into what exactly is physical, what exactly is being physical? Sensation. But why is sensation known as physical, and what is being physical? How did I get the idea of being physical? So, I began to enquire into this thing. That, eh, actually on top of that, there is still further things to deconstruct, that is the meaning... that, just like self, I'm attached to the meaning of self, and you create a construct, it becomes a reification. Same thing, physicality also. So, you deconstruct the concepts surrounding physicality. Correct? So, when you deconstruct that, then I began to realize that all along, we try to understand, even after the experience of let's say, anatta and all these... when we analyze, and when we think and try to understand something, we are using existing scientific concepts, logic, common day to day logic and all these to understand something. And it is always excluding consciousness. Even if you experience, you can lead a spiritual path you know, but when you think and analyze something, somehow you always exclude consciousness from the equation of understanding something. Your concept is always very materialistic. We always exclude consciousness from the whole equation." - ATR Meeting 28 October 2020 - Google Docs

"[21:45] <^john^> true quality of meditation comes when there is this sudden awareness of the 'I'. A mere sense of pure existence. The Isness that Merely IS without any sense of thought. And this is what one should treasure most. :) But when the experience is mixed with the content of thought, it becomes pretty confusing. Because thought cannot touch its realm. When one tries to capture this experience out of his meditative state, he will suffer great pain.

[21:53] <^john^> what i can tell you is that Buddhism has profound insight into the nature of 'I'. And it is true about whatever that is taught. :)

[21:54] <^john^> Pure awareness is the only peace there is.
[21:55] AEN: the nature if "i" is also non-dualistic. and any concept and perspective and view of the "i" is naturally delusioned. rite?
[21:56] <^john^> yes but knowing must not come from thinking. It must come from a direct perception. Before entering into buddhism, I thought it is not possible to recapture this state of non-dual. But constant practice will proof this wrong. In fact we can, by vipassana meditation." – John Tan, 2004

"There is nothing wrong with the Isness experienced as "I AM" except that it is skewed towards the 'thought' realm. The cognitive mind is overwhelmed by the transcendental experience and wants to monopolize the entirety of Presence. As such the purity is distorted. Full and equal authentication of Isness as experienced in "I AM" must also be fully experienced in all appearance and to all moments of manifestation. When the 'center' is dissolved, no preference

can be made between “Amness” and Appearances”, nothing can be more clear, All is it!" - John Tan to JonLS [Din Robinson], 2007

"Isness that arises from “I AM” is a sensation of not wanting to add or subtract anything from present moment but still with a strong sense of object and subject split intact. It is the act of letting things be as it is. However as the experience has not dissolved the subject-object split, there is still a clear separation of “I AM” and object and that already is not as it is. For in truth reality is always non-dual so when there is a split, it is already not "as it is"." - John Tan, 2007

John Tan's reply on something Malcolm wrote in 2020:

“This is like what I tell you and essentially emphasizing 明心非见性. 先明心, 后见性. (Soh: Apprehending Mind is not seeing [its] Nature. First apprehend Mind, later realise [its] Nature).

First is directly authenticating mind/consciousness 明心 (Soh: Apprehending Mind). There is the direct path like zen sudden enlightenment of one's original mind or mahamudra or dzogchen direct introduction of rigpa or even self enquiry of advaita -- the direct, immediate, perception of "consciousness" without intermediaries. They are the same.

However that is not realization of emptiness. Realization of emptiness is 见性 (Soh: Seeing Nature). Imo there is direct path to 明心 (Soh: Apprehending Mind) but I have not seen any direct path to 见性 (Soh: Seeing Nature) yet. If you go through the depth and nuances of our mental constructs, you will understand how deep and subtle the blind spots are.

Therefore emptiness or 空性 (Soh: Empty Nature) is the main difference between buddhism and other religions. Although anatta is the direct experiential taste of emptiness, there is still a difference between buddhist's anatta and selflessness of other religions -- whether it is anatta by experiential taste of the dissolution of self alone or the experiential taste is triggered by wisdom of emptiness.

The former focused on selflessness and whole path of practice is all about doing away with self whereas the latter is about living in the wisdom of emptiness and applying that insight and wisdom of emptiness to all phenomena.

As for emptiness there is the fine line of seeing through inherentness of Tsongkhapa and there is the emptiness free from extremes by Gorampa. Both are equally profound so do not talk nonsense and engaged in profane speech as in terms of result, ultimately they are the same (imo).”

Dalai Lama - "Nature - there are many different levels. Conventional level, one nature. There are also, you see, different levels. Then, ultimate level, ultimate reality... so simply realise the Clarity of the Mind, that is the conventional level. That is common with Hindus, like that. So we have to know these different levels...." - Dalai Lama on Anatta and Emptiness of Buddha Nature in New Book

Someone asked, *"I think I understand. So all of these aspects [Four Aspects of I AM] can be experienced without the realization of "I Am"? Does the realization of "I Am" mean all of these aspects are actualized all at once, but just not fully? What is stream-entry in Buddhism pointing to? Is that an "I am" realization, or just an aspect of "I am"?"*

Soh: "No, the four aspects do not come simultaneously with I AM realization. The aspect of impersonality (like being lived by a cosmic and impersonal Life/Spirit/Intelligence/God) is experienced for some before I AM realization, and for me it is experienced a few months after the I AM realization. They complement each other and a mature state of I AM will include impersonality.

Some Indian Advaita masters distinguish 'Self-Realization' from 'God-Realization', with the latter being a more advanced phase. God-Realization is the Impersonality aspect being experienced after initial I AM realization.

To me, the scriptural version (as opposed to other versions like MCTB, which is rather defined as the 4th path) of stream entry requires realization of anatta, a thorough seeing through of self view. Thusness Stage 5. Otherwise it cannot be called the end of self view. All stages before Thusness Stage 5 still does not overcome the false view of self and extreme views like eternalism thoroughly, therefore fall into various non-Buddhist views.

I AM is absolutely *not* Buddhist stream entry. It is also not found in some maps like MCTB, nor does it feature as a stage of enlightenment in the earliest Buddhist teachings, although it is very likely that Buddha went through that phase while studying under two Samkhya meditation teachers but that's another story." (Also related: [insight] [buddhism] A reconsideration of the meaning of "Stream-Entry" considering the data points of both pragmatic Dharma and traditional Buddhism , Definition of First Bhumi)

Someone said, *"It's interesting, whenever I practice "I am," I feel an *increased" sense of localization behind the eyes, not a move toward nonduality. I am doing other practices (such as the "sheer miracle of experience") to deepen nondual recognition. This is despite the fact that Soh would diagnose me as not having stabilized "I AM" realization."*

Soh replied, "There are different levels of I AM. At a deeper level, it reveals its nonlocalised, diffused, infinite and all pervading aspect

Also at the I AM, you feel like the luminous void background containing all sceneries. You do not pass by objects while walking, they pass through you. Perhaps you can get a sense of it if you do douglas harding exercises on having no head

https://youtu.be/oHcjkdo3cO8

https://youtu.be/gHfD8ozxXhA

Here is another good video on self-enquiry by Greg Goode:

https://youtu.be/MTvyLfCd9jI

"There is no evidence awareness is contained inside a body"

Also, I AM itself is a “nondual recognition”. It is completely nondual, awareness being awareness without subject object division".

Tips on Self Enquiry: Investigate Who am I, Not 'Ask' Who am I

Mr. C: Hello Soh,

I have been practicing a lot of Self Inquiry during the past week. I’m reaching that thoughtless state and when I inquire “Who’s aware of this experience?” there’s no change. Is just this boundless space where there’s just awareness.

I read your journal and you describe being in a blank and asking “Who is aware of this experience?” and having a experience of being.

I wouldn’t say that the “place” I dwell it’s blank because it is very clear. And there’s a feeling of just being That. But at the same time I don’t feel anything really different in my perception of reality (beyond few thoughts and higher space awareness)

Am I missing something?

Thank you

Soh replied:

What you experience is good. Continue inquiring.

Session Start: Sunday, 25 October, 2009

(2:07 AM) AEN: just now it occurred to me that the places i've been are hazy like a dream, they come and go.... then i realised my thoughts also are like a dream, they come and go... when i dropped that theres only my own existence and presence left which is real and not hazy at all and doesnt come and go
(2:34 AM) AEN: then for a short while i was only aware of my own existence... until i got distracted :P
(5:16 AM) Thusness: not bad... 🙂 That is the beginning phase of I AM.
(5:19 AM) Thusness: first drop your thoughts, drop all sort of mental chattering, drop everything, don't think of non-dual. Allow urself to be filled with only this sense of existence. This is the first phase.
(5:19 AM) AEN: icic..
(5:20 AM) Thusness: then you will realize what existence is. 🙂

Mr. C:

That's good to hear. I'll keep working 🙏🏽
You said to keep inquiring, but this advice from Jon about dropping everything and allowing to be filled with sense of existence, to do this I need to stop the Inquiry right?

To clarify, this state of Being is different from the blank state. If it is the blank state I should keep inquiring but if it is the Being (sense of existence) should I let go of Inquiring?

Soh replied:
doesnt mean stop inquiry
i still inquired all the way to February 2010 when I realized I AM
inquiry is supposed to lead to the non-conceptual taste and realization of Existence, so its non contradictory
as long as there is slightest doubt what Existence is then continue inquiry. if you are just resting as Existence then just go into it

Mr. C:
Yeah my question is during practice. If I should stop inquiring when I'm just at a state of Being, not a blank state but a very clear Existence.

Thank you Soh!

Soh replied:
yes. the purpose of inquiry is not to keep repeating the question but to turn your attention to the Self

quote from
https://happinessofbeing.blogspot.com/2021/05/can-self-investigation-boost-mind-or.html

5. Nāṉ Ār? paragraph 6: if or as soon as anything other than ourself appears in our awareness, we should simply turn our attention back towards ourself, the one to whom all other things (all thoughts, forms or phenomena) appear

Regarding your statement, 'I keep doing the enquiry "to whom these thoughts arise?", "to me", "who am I?" but I don't know what I should do more', these words, 'to whom does this appear?', 'to me', 'who am I?', are a very useful pointer given by Bhagavan, but we should understand clearly what he meant by this pointer. He did not mean that we

should repeat these words to ourself whenever anything appears, but that we should simply turn our attention back to ourself, the one to whom all other things (all thoughts, forms or phenomena) appear. That is, he did not say 'ask to whom' or 'ask who am I' but 'investigate to whom' and 'investigate who am I', as he wrote in the following portion of the sixth paragraph of Nāṉ Ār?:

பிற வெண்ணங்க ளெழுந்தா லவற்றைப் பூர்த்தி பண்ணுவதற்கு எத்தனியாமல் அவை யாருக்குண்டாயின என்று விசாரிக்க வேண்டும். எத்தனை எண்ணங்க ளெழினு மென்ன? ஜாக்கிரதையாய் ஒவ்வோ ரெண்ணமும் கிளம்பும்போதே இது யாருக்குண்டாயிற்று என்று விசாரித்தால் எனக்கென்று தோன்றும். நானார் என்று விசாரித்தால் மனம் தன் பிறப்பிடத்திற்குத் திரும்பிவிடும்; எழுந்த வெண்ணமு மடங்கிவிடும். இப்படிப் பழகப் பழக மனத்திற்குத் தன் பிறப்பிடத்திற் றங்கி நிற்கும் சக்தி யதிகரிக்கின்றது.

piṟa v-eṇṇaṅgaḷ eṙundāl avaṯṯai-p pūrtti paṇṇuvadaṟku ettaṉiyāmal avai yārukku uṇḍāyiṉa eṉḏṟu vicārikka vēṇḍum. ettaṉai eṇṇaṅgaḷ eṙiṉum eṉṉa? jāggirataiyāy ovvōr eṇṇamum kiḷambum-pōdē idu yārukku uṇḍāyiṯṟu eṉḏṟu vicārittāl eṉakkeṉḏṟu tōṉḏṟum. nāṉ-ār eṉḏṟu vicārittāl maṉam taṉ piṟappiḍattiṟku-t tirumbi-viḍum; eṙunda v-eṇṇamum aḍaṅgi-viḍum. ippaḍi-p paṙaga-p paṙaga maṉattiṟku-t taṉ piṟappiḍattil taṅgi niṟgum śakti y-adhikarikkiṉḏṟadu.

If other thoughts rise, without trying to complete them it is necessary to investigate to whom they have occurred. However many thoughts rise, what [does it matter]? Vigilantly, as soon as each thought appears, if one investigates to whom it has occurred, it will be clear: to me. If one investigates who am I [by vigilantly attending to oneself, the 'me' to whom everything else appears], the mind will return to its birthplace [namely oneself, the source from which it arose]; [and since one thereby refrains from attending to it] the thought that had risen will also cease. When one practises and practises in this manner, for the mind the power to stand firmly established in its birthplace increases.

The verb he used here that I have translated as 'investigate' is விசாரி (vicāri), which in some contexts can mean enquire in the sense of ask, but in this context means enquire only in the sense of investigate. Asking questions is a mental activity, because it entails directing our attention away from ourself towards a question, which is a thought and hence other than ourself, so as long as we are asking questions we are still floating on the surface of the mind by attending to things other than ourself, whereas investigating ourself means being keenly self-attentive, which causes the mind to sink deep within and thereby return to its 'birthplace', the source from which it had risen, namely our real nature (ātma-svarūpa), which is our fundamental and ever-shining awareness of our own existence, 'I am'.

Therefore what Bhagavan is pointing out in this passage is the direction in which we should send our attention. Instead of allowing our attention to go out following whatever thoughts may arise, we should turn it back towards ourself, the one to whom all thoughts appear. 'To whom?' is not intended to be a question that we should ask ourself but is a very powerful pointer indicating where we should direct our attention. Asking the question 'to whom?' may sometimes be an aid if it helps to remind us to turn our attention back towards ourself, but self-investigation (ātma-vicāra) is not merely asking such questions but only fixing our attention on ourself alone.

Another point worth noting here is that what Bhagavan means by 'thought' is anything other than our fundamental awareness 'I am', so it includes all perceptions, memories, feelings, ideas and other mental impressions of any kind whatsoever. As he says in the fourth paragraph of Nāṉ Ār?, 'நினைவுகளைத் தவிர்த்து ஜகமென்றோர் பொருள் அன்னியமா யில்லை' (niṉaivugaḷai-t tavirttu jagam eṉḏṟu ōr poruḷ aṉṉiyam-āy illai), 'Excluding thoughts, there is not separately any such thing as world', and in the fourteenth paragraph, 'ஜக மென்பது நினைவே' (jagam eṉbadu niṉaivē), 'What is called the world is only thought', so when he says here 'பிற வெண்ணங்க ளெழுந்தால்' (piṟa v-eṇṇaṅgaḷ eṙundāl), 'If other thoughts rise', or 'ஒவ்வோ ரெண்ணமும் கிளம்பும்போதே' (ovvōr eṇṇamum kiḷambum-pōdē), 'As soon as each thought appears', he means that if or as soon as anything other than ourself appears in our awareness, we should turn our attention back towards ourself, the one to whom all such things appear.

6. If we are vigilantly self-attentive, as we should try to be, we will thereby ward off both thoughts and sleep, but when we are tired we are naturally less vigilant, so we may then fall asleep as a result of our trying to be self-attentive

You ask, 'Should I keep doing Self-Enquiry all day for hours in seated position? Should I continue the enquiry in bed as well before sleep? Or should I stop the enquiry from time to time to give some rest to the body?' Firstly, self-investigation has nothing to do with the body, so we can practise it whether the body is lying, sitting, standing, walking or doing anything else. For the same reason, we do not have to stop being self-attentive in order to give some rest to the body, because being self-attentive cannot strain the body in any way. In fact, when the body and mind are resting is a very favourable condition for us to be self-attentive.

Regarding your question about continuing the practice in bed before sleep, that is also good, but since we are generally very tired at that time, we usually subside into sleep soon after trying to be self-attentive. There is no harm in that, because when we need to sleep we should sleep. There is no time and no circumstance that is not suitable for us to be self-attentive, so we should try to be self-attentive as much as possible whatever the time or circumstances may be, but we should not try to deprive ourself of however much sleep we may need.

If we are vigilantly self-attentive, as we should try to be, we will thereby ward off both thoughts and sleep, but when we are tired we are naturally less vigilant, so we may then fall asleep as a result of our trying to be self-attentive. As Sadhu Om often used to say, when we are sleepy we should sleep, because when we wake up again we will be fresh, and we should then make use of that freshness by trying to be vigilantly self-attentive.

I do not know whether anything I have written here is of any use to you, but I hope some of it at least may help to point you in the right direction.

7. What the word 'I' essentially refers to is only what is aware, so if we are just being aware of what is aware, we are thereby meditating on 'I'

In reply to my first reply (which I adapted as the previous six sections) my friend wrote again about how he was trying to practise self-enquiry and the problems he was facing, in reply to which I wrote:

When you say 'The practice of Self-Enquiry, especially in seated position (just being aware of awareness itself, not meditating in any object or form etc, simply just being, not even "I" in the "I am") boosted my kundalini', it is not clear to me what you are actually practising, because you say you are 'just being aware of awareness itself' but then seem to say that you are not meditating even on 'I'. Meditating on 'I' means attending only to yourself, or in other words, just being self-attentive, so if you are not meditating on 'I', what do you mean by saying that you are 'just being aware of awareness itself'?

In this context 'awareness' means what is aware, and what is aware is always aware of itself as 'I', so what the word 'I' essentially refers to is only what is aware. Therefore if you are not meditating on 'I', what is the 'awareness' that you are being aware of? Unfortunately 'awareness' is a potentially ambiguous term, because it could be taken to mean awareness in the sense of awareness of objects or phenomena, so when you are 'just being aware of awareness itself', are you just being aware of what is aware, namely yourself, or are you being aware of your awareness of objects or phenomena?

If you are being aware only of what is aware, namely yourself, then you are meditating on 'I'. That is, what you are meditating on is not the word 'I', but what the word 'I' refers to, namely yourself, who are what is aware. If you are not meditating on what the word 'I' refers to, then whatever 'awareness' you are being aware of is something other than what is aware.

This is why Bhagavan gave us the powerful pointer 'to whom', about which I wrote in my previous reply. If we understand this pointer correctly, it is directing our attention back towards ourself, the one to whom all other things appear. In other words, it is pointing our attention back to what is aware, away from whatever we were hitherto aware of.

If you are aware of any phenomenon, such as the boosting of your kuṇḍalinī, your attention has been diverted away from yourself, so you need to turn it back to yourself, the one to whom all phenomena appear. If you turn your attention back to yourself and hold firmly to yourself (that is, if you just remain firmly self-attentive), whatever phenomena may have appeared will thereby disappear, because no phenomenon can appear or remain in your awareness unless you attend to it at least to a certain extent.

8. No matter what may distract us or seem a problem to us, let us not be concerned about them but just patiently and persistently continue trying to be self-attentive, unmindful of everything else

Regarding the boosting of your kuṇḍalinī you say, 'By boosting I mean that I feel an energy in the spine passing through the chakras', but the energy, the spine, the cakras and the energy's movement are all objects or phenomena, so you should ignore all such things by trying to be keenly self-attentive. However much such things appear, they need

not concern you. To whom do they appear? Only to you, so you should just persevere in trying to attend only to yourself.

Whatever may appear or disappear is other than ourself, so it should not interest or concern us. Such things distract us and become a problem for us only to the extent that we take interest in them or are concerned about them. Why should we be concerned about them? Our only concern should be to investigate and know what we ourself are. If we are not interested in or concerned about anything else, we will not attend to them, and hence they will not be a problem.

If we find ourself being concerned about such things and therefore distracted by them, that is due to the strength of our viṣaya-vāsanās, and the most effective means to weaken our viṣaya-vāsanās and thereby wean our mind off its interest in all other things is just to persevere in this simple practice of being self-attentive. Therefore, no matter what may distract us or seem a problem to us, let us not be concerned about them but just patiently and persistently continue trying to be self-attentive, unmindful of everything else.
https://happinessofbeing.blogspot.com/2021/05/can-self-investigation-boost-mind-or.html

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Mr C: Yeah, it seems that I was still inquiring even when I was aware of Being. That's why I was feeling stuck.

I will now Inquire only there's something othar than "myself" appearing.

This pointer "To whom?" is really good. Short and direct.

Thank you!
Hey Soh, just wanna say that those last instructions made a huge difference.

Practice now is really sharp and asking “To whom?” has been the perfect inquiry to return to Being.

Outside formal practice the sense of self is expanding everywhere even though there was no “eureka” moment yet. There’s a feel of awareness being 360 degrees specially behind my head and shoulders.

Soh: (thumbs up)

Told someone something similar today:

[5:19 PM, 8/4/2021] Mr. W: Trying to find the unfindable "me"...

"Where" the hell is this "awareness" if it is not inside my head?
[7:03 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: If you are trying to locate it in your field of experience thats like looking in the display for the screen. Looking for the experiencer in the experience. I AM realization is the realization of You, so you don't look for You outside anywhere
[7:03 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Find out to whom does head and everything appear to/in
[7:05 PM, 8/4/2021] Mr. W: I suppose that's being aware of being aware?
[7:06 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: You can say so. Turn your attention around to realize what You/Awareness is
[7:11 PM, 8/4/2021] Mr. W: Yah, will focus on this
[7:11 PM, 8/4/2021] Mr. W: As in one of your recent comments... it's not an intellectual questioning yah?
[7:24 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: You need to investigate but investigation is not verbally repeating a question
[7:24 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Investigate means you distinguish what is you and what is not you
[7:25 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Then you turn away from the not you to realise you
[7:25 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: All these is done in a non verbal manner
[7:35 PM, 8/4/2021] Mr. W: I know the answer is the one that is aware of experience. But what is missing?
[8:06 PM, 8/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Realization comes with total certainty and direct taste
[8:25 PM, 8/4/2021] Mr. W: Okay, keep trying. Hope the Eureka moment happens sooner rather than later.

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As Jayson pointed out, with any of these perceptions, experiences you can simply inquire "who is the one perceiving?" Then look "there." Also can just notice the vantage FROM which you seem to be perceiving each experience and rest there. Often this comes with a sort of stepwise inward moving experience but hold that description loosely. When you come to a truly contentless experience there will be nothing to do no where specific to look and an alertness to any arising thought or perception which will be immediately discounted as such. Once this is clear there's not a lot more to do but stay with it, stay alert but don't strain. There are a few expected "reactions" at this point one being physiologic fear/terror. If it comes and you remain in thoughtless clarity it will pass. Practice this way and let me know what you find. I've worked with a handful of people in exactly the way you are practicing in last couple weeks who all broke through. You got this. But you gotta go where you no longer know where you are 😉

- Angelo Dilullo

Labels: I AMness, Self Enquiry 0 comments | |

Complementary Practices to Self-Enquiry

Ramana Maharshi teaches that the most direct path to self-realization is self-enquiry. That is what Ramana would teach first. However if the seeker says he/she has trouble inquiring properly, Ramana may advice on other methods like controlling the breath. Other secondary practices are useful, such as breath control, if one is unable to get the mind to a relatively silent stable state for effective inquiry. A wandering monkey mind (a chattery mind) is not able to effectively inquire into what you truly are prior to thinking. However one must come back to inquiry at the end.

Also, someone asked Nisargadatta, "**Q:** In the beginning we may have to pray and meditate for some time before we are ready for self-inquiry.

M: If you believe so, go on. To me, all delay is a waste of time. You can skip all the preparation and go directly for the ultimate search within. Of all the Yogas it is the simplest and the shortest."

"Jun 20
Taste of I AMness and Integration with the Somatic
[3:03 PM, 6/20/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Albert Hong
Albert Hong I'm not sure if OP got his answer yet. Probably, but I can add another opinion to the mix. To get access to AMness or Beingness one has to distinguish the vital energy from the body. Then the essence of that vital energy, which is the life force or your sense of being alive is your BeingNess.

So you can think of it this way. You have a body. You also breath air or prana. When the air accumulates within you, due to spiritual practice. Which is basically coarse body identification becoming more subtle. Then from that arises the sense of Being. It is the most subtle substance that is arisen from your body, due to you eating food.

I'm not sure what your "practice" is. But if you do anything body based or breath based then naturally you will understand what is meant by inner vitality. An inner sense of aliveness or well being or just having more energy due to spiritual practice.

If you give you attention to that life energy then it will naturally become more subtle until your whole sense of a body is just bliss and knowingness.

then Amness becomes the very most subtle substance of everything. but it all begins with coarse to subtle to AMness.

A large part of isolating the sense of YOYou ARE is due to interacting with being abiding in such state. Then it becomes clear what that taste or flavor is. Then it becomes a process of distinguishing that from coarse body identification, which is nothing but muscular tensions. Those tensions then when recognized as the YOYou ARE become bliss, become nothing but YOYou ARE.

So fundamentally the quickest way to recognize that is to get into the physical presence of a teacher. Then the work is isolating it apart from all the possible experiences and in particular the different bodies from coarse to subtle. Then

reintergrating that sense into all the bodies again.

The emphasis is also on somatic practices. You don't just live with your thinking mind. You live as a body. There are modalities of knowing that mostly are not spoken in spirituality due to the heavy emphasis on intellectualism.

Devotion for instance is a great access point to realize AMness. When you truly love something without boundaries, without desire then the aliveness or soul essence of what you love shines forth.

So if Who am I doesn't work just note that there are many, many ways.
[3:58 PM, 6/20/2020] John Tan: This is very good. In fact this is what I want to tell you but it can be make more insightful and direct.
[4:16 PM, 6/20/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. think i will put into stage 1 chapter in atr guide haha
[4:19 PM, 6/20/2020] John Tan: No I am referring to other aspects. You are looking at just AMness. But Albert put it quite well for both, total exertion as well as this comment. Did you get what Albert is trying to say? OP is about Mr. F?
[5:08 PM, 6/20/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Its about discovering the taste of amness then reintegrating that taste into somatic.. like after anatta
[5:08 PM, 6/20/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Someone asking about self enquiry
[5:11 PM, 6/20/2020] John Tan: Yes. Did I tell you that at certain phase you have to switch to somatic and energy practice and that is the turn point where intellectual is replaced by sensing energy and somatic-body presence.
[6:03 PM, 6/20/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. I think so.. last year
[6:04 PM, 6/20/2020] John Tan: It is the time when I told you to practice yoga.
Labels: Albert Hong, Anatta, Energy, I AMness, Luminosity 0 comments | |"

Someone asked, *"In the spirit of a recent thread considering the heart, metta, etc., I was considering that, for me, an inquiry alone approach to insight is not skillful. That is, not only are other practices important for balanced development, but inquiry simply will not yield insight without certain other practices to help it penetrate to the necessary depth. I was wondering what others' experiences are in this regard, particularly those further along in their inquiry. Were there other practices you did that you know were crucial in your inquiry yielding insight? What were they? Did it change at different stages of insight?*

For me, at my beginner level, I can tell that for "Who am I" inquiry to be successful I have to come more into myself on all levels. Come fully into the body, fully into the heart, fully into the senses, fully into a mind without thought. So I do practices related to these things."

Soh replied, "It is possible to skew to certain aspects but must catch up with the others later.

For me I skewed towards self enquiry and awareness in earlier years. I would inquire both in formal sittings and even in daily activities whenever circumstances permit. But in later years I had to look into other aspects.

This is similar to the Buddha saying that there are a few possibilities -- someone may master insight before samadhi (meditative absorption), may master samadhi before insight, may master both in tandem. Both are important and necessary to master for the purpose of liberating one's afflictions/defilements and put a complete end to suffering.

The Buddha did not say 'you have to do insight first before samadhi' or 'you have to do samadhi first before insight' or 'you must definitely do both in tandem', nor does he say 'you must definitely focus on metta (loving-kindness) first'. He simply listed the possibilities and taught the different practices, and his students were made of various groups, each group were drawn to different practices (some focused on metta (loving-kindness), some anapanasati (mindfulness of breathing), some trained on insight under Sariputta and others in samadhi under Moggallana, etc).

However, many were sent to the arahant Sariputta first to train in insight in order to attain stream entry, followed by training under the other arahant Mogallana in order to develop the samadhi necessary for the attainment of arahantship.

As a side note, John Tan basically informed me (Soh) many years back that his depth of clarity in insights is very thorough, in fact we can't find it described in books (Especially the part of view, realization and experience, and the integration of +A and -A). However if you are seeking advice on developing very deep samadhi, like deep mastery of jhanas, samadhi, and so on like Mogallana, or being able to remain in absorption for days and months like Ramana Maharshi, then perhaps you should find some other guide or person to train under in those areas.

Therefore how each person's journey unfolds is different and equally valid. Walk the path you feel drawn to (as long as it leads to insight and tranquility), what feels right to you, and what you find most effective for you based on your experience. But be aware of what is lacking and continue to work towards a balanced and mature practice in all areas - wisdom, compassion, samadhi, energy practices, conduct, etc. I think it is good however to have a balanced approach from the start if possible.

For example, right now I need to focus more on somatic and energy practices because certain issues (energy imbalances) surfaced recently (but thankfully resolved in a week). Perhaps if I mastered them from the beginning I will face less problems. Yet by facing those energy imbalances, I've learnt something, so it's both good and bad, the good side being that I've learnt the importance of release on the energetic level, being light as feather and immense as universe, and the harmfulness from the wrong approach of overfocusing on the experience (especially in intense PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) in the senses, or the I AM) as that pattern of overfocused intense radiance is itself tenseness/tension and subtle clinging. The bad side - well, it's going to disrupt your life, it's going to be unpleasant, you may not be able to function as normal, and if unsolved and gone to the extreme (usually the case if one does not have a good teacher -- fortunately I had John Tan to guide me), it's going to be a very painful experience for a prolonged period of time (sometimes years).

Yesterday I just had a very short transient period where the caffeine in tea (I drank one cup of coffee and then tea a couple of hours later) triggered a slight re-run of the energy imbalance episode, however fortunately it resolved itself not too

long later. A reminder also to be more somatic and circulate my energies. I'm ok today. (Also it is wise to refrain or reduce on caffeine if your energy and radiance is already heightened)

I would go as far to say that even the Buddha was experimental in his approach to teaching various methods to students. For example, after teaching the contemplation on the impurity of body, 60 monks went to commit suicide out of disgust of their own body. After he found out about this, the Buddha then switched to teaching anapanasati (mindfulness of breathing). But the contemplation on the impurity of the body is quite a good way of practicing (especially as a means of overcoming lust and passion, but I have no experience in this method of practice and therefore cannot advise others on it), however just that like many methods, it comes with certain dangers when done by the wrong type of people. So what resonates or is suitable for one person may not be so for another. For example, Ajahn Maha Boowa wrote about his success in practicing the contemplation on the impurity of the body.

In short, what works for one may not work as well for another, so you have to experiment and find what works best for yourself.

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Ramana and Eckhart Tolle realised the Self the very first time they spontaneously did self enquiry. I practiced self enquiry for almost two years. So... each person is different. Ramana became more devotional after Self-Realization. Some people were devotional before Self-Realization, e.g. Greg Goode mentioned about devotion leading to some opening of the heart that facilitated his non-dual inquiry. Metta definitely has the same heart opening potential and can definitely aid inquiry and other non dual contemplations. Personally I'm never the really devotional kind but I still pray to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas at times.

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Also as an alternative to Self-Enquiry, John Tan back then asked me to look into the Do Nothing method by Shinzen Young as another alternative way to realize the Self. However I did not focus on that practice.

https://www.dropbox.com/s/9z75xwl111jntey/Shinzen%20young%20ReturntotheSource.pdf?dl=0

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A conversation with John Tan more than 10 years ago:

Me: By the way is it possible to experience I AMness without self inquiry? for example the person who wrote "awareness watching awareness" just focus on awareness alone then experienced I AMness. He didn't ask "Who am I". but I think "Who am I" is very useful

Thusness: it is possible but the sort [of practice] it is a more gradual approach. It will not have that sort of 'Eureka' factor. The next step (into non-dual) is to bring this into the foreground by practicing bare attention of our body sensations. The Eureka factor is very important part for Realization. Self Inquiry is the Direct (not gradual) method to Self-Realization.

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16th October 2010

Someone asked, "AEN, I remember you said without practicing self-inquiry, it is impossible to attain I AM stage. If this is true, how do you explain Michael Langford's AWA method? J"

My reply:

It will lead to the I AM realization but will be a gradual path. Self inquiry is the direct path. Not long ago I had a conversation with Thusness about this:
AEN: btw what you think about what I said about kundalini?
Thusness: what did you say about kundalini?
AEN: I said kundalini related practices may lead to experience but for realization you need to do some kind of investigation like self inquiry or koan. I mean I told mikael that
Thusness: no, both can lead to realization, koan is just an instrument. imo when you practice into a state of total openness, purity and clarity, you will realize your non-dual luminous essence
AEN: oic.. but you also said experience and realization aren't the same right
Thusness: it isn't the same, but you are not talking about that
AEN: what do you mean
Thusness: you are talking about kundalini and koan. you are not talking about experience and realization. koan leads you to direct realization
AEN: hmm but then you said practicing into a state of total openness, purity, clarity (state = experience?) you then realize nondual luminous essence you mean the experience leads to realization?
Thusness: kundalini leads you differently... you would have to go through the path. they too lead to realization of Self ultimately, however, the path is different. it is like (the difference between) gradual path and direct path
AEN: when you said 'practicing into a state of total openness, purity and clarity' you're referring to kundalini practice?
Thusness: yeah...all aim to reach such a state, where the Self is realized by kundalini, opening of chakras, by micro and macroscopic orbit of chi
Thusness: when you practice bringing to the foreground, you will also experienced complete and full integration of energy. you may then focus on energy...
AEN: oic.. the energy is the same as chi?
Thusness: I do not know. I am not a chi gong master. go step by step...bring your experience to the foreground first... do not think you can fully understand no-self or have experienced the breadth and depth of no-self. it is not like what

the AF people think, it is not in logic. When you are able to experienced fully and opening whatever arises without the sense of Self/self, it is different.

AEN: I see.. btw you said by practicing openness, purity, clarity, it will lead to the realization... does that mean prolonged experience will eventually result in realization?

Thusness: it is not that... your question is too naïve. you are disregarding the entire path of practice. you are not knowing the purpose of that particular path of practice, what is the purpose of awakening the kundalini. have you gone into it before you asked?

AEN: im not sure... Mr. J said it's very effective in bringing one to the experience of ego dissolution quickly so that you can know your luminous nature

Thusness: what are you asking now? are you asking about koan or kundalini or what?

AEN: kundalini

Thusness: so you must study kundalini, how does awakening of kundalini lead to Self-Realization? it is the same as koan, except that it is by way of awakening the magic serpent in this case. you do not need to penetrate by way of koan, koan might not suit everyone. if you ask your mum, it might be more suitable to do chanting or even kundalini practice, but she would have to know the purpose of practice. much like your grandmaster teach you 觉照 (illumination of awareness), same like teaching awareness of awareness. if you practice until there is total practice openness, pure like a mirror, spaciousness and luminous... if you stabilized these experiences, you will realize. but your experience and realization will be very stable, not like direct path of realization, the strength is not there.

AEN: same for kundalini? will the experience be stable?

Thusness: yeah...because they start from there opening gate by gate

AEN: ic.. ya I remember, the one who taught awareness watching awareness practice, michael langford, he practice 2 to 12 hours of AWA practice everyday for almost 2 years... and then he achieved something like eternal bliss or liberation or something but it sounded like he has a very very stable experience plus realization through that practice alone

Thusness: yes. I have told you once you realized, you are guided by what?

AEN: realization?

Thusness: you have not read what I told you

AEN: you said sincerity and realization

Thusness: the top part

AEN: oh the taste of a pure, original, primordial, non-conceptual and non-dual luminous state of existence

Thusness: yes. isn't that an experience? I have said I do not like to differentiate but it is just to bring out this point, so you might stabilize your experience of mirror like clarity, you practice non-conceptuality and stabilized it. you practice purity of intention till you deconstruct personality

AEN: oic..means after realization, one must work to stabilize those experiences?

Thusness: you can, and indirectly yes. but you can also do by further refining your realizations. like bringing this experience to the foreground, and then you realized anatta, and then emptiness and self-liberation

AEN: oic..

Thusness: foreground practice becomes very important to you now. Now if you were to practice bringing this experience to the foreground, what will you realized?

AEN: non dual?
Thusness: how come?
AEN: because one experiences one taste in all experiences
Thusness: no good
AEN: there is no subject-object division in all experiences?
Thusness: I want you to experience directly. Whatever I tell you will only prevent you from experiencing directly
AEN: there is no inside and outside, subject and object division in direct experience of sound, seeing, taste, etc
Thusness: yes. You challenge 'inside/outside', boundaries, arising and ceasing... one by one. you must come to several important direct realizations. what did richard teach the AF practitioners? what is the question he told all to focus?
AEN: how am I experiencing this moment of being alive?
Thusness: yes. how is this different from bringing the experience to the foreground? anything special?
AEN: I think 'being alive' can mean background or foreground depending on context of it being said
Thusness: you have already experienced the background, the AF are not interested in the background. if I ask 2 +3 = ?, then I ask 3 + 2 = ? and you can answer the first question but not the second, what does it prove?
AEN: that I dunnu maths? lol
Thusness: means you are not clear, you merely memorized
AEN: ic.. ya
Thusness: you do not realize. if you realized, then do you think 2 + 3 is very different from 3 + 2?
AEN: no
Thusness: same applies to what I asked you above.

...

- Soh Wei Yu IMO self-enquiry is even more direct than Michael Langford's Awareness Watching Awareness practice. Though they are in some ways related, AWA is a more gradual path towards Self-Realization, but also effective. The reason for this is also explained in the AtR guide.
- **CI wrote:** Ah, I see. I've been equating them as the similar. For self-inquiry I say "what am i" then allow myself to investigate the silence. For AWA it feels like I'm basking in the silence. I checked out the guide and feel as thought I should have an "I Am" realization before moving further with the ebook. Alot of the text has terms like lumosity and such which I'm not totally familiar. I come from a Buddhists background and anatta is one of the three marks of existence. I assume anatta is the dropping off of selfhood completely which is pretty incredible. It reminds of 4th path. Coming from the "pragmatic dharma" community some say 4th path is a myth. I'm unsure. Experience is king of course. Ok, I'll drop AWA and focus on self-inquiry.
-

  Soh Wei Yu Not just silence but find out who/what is aware of that silence?

  What is Existence itself? What is Presence-Awareness? What am I? Who am I? Before birth, Who am I?

I just wrote this to someone days back:

"when you are asking who am I, you should not be going after 'effects' or 'experiences', because all these are besides the point. the only 'effect' you should be seeking is to find out and have complete certainty of what Self is, which is exactly what the question is about - Who am I? so you must ask in a way that you really, really just want to know what 'I' or Self really is, and anything else is besides the point
👍1
that realization can take months, or years for some (so be patient and/but not to seek after something in the future but just look directly into the immediate truth of your Being), depending, but it must be asked with the intent of discovering your true Presence-Awareness as your very luminous essence. maybe also read some John Wheeler (the advaitin teacher) books or Ramana Maharshi books for pointers as well
the anatta stanza is for a different kind of insight
but again the emphasis must be on realization, insight into what is always already the case
i usually ask people to go through the I AM realization first because without that, if people enter into anatta they will usually skew to the first stanza and miss out the luminosity, then they will need to bring it out at another phase -- luminosity and intensity of luminosity
so you must understand the anatta stanza has a different purpose from Who am I, it leads to different insight and realization, but both are important and must be complemented
and you must also understand that what is crucial for all these is Realization. without it, those contemplations have not reached its purpose
mr. rdt wrote about how he made a mistake by focusing on experience through bahiya sutta rather than contemplating on the nature of mind as anatta
https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fawakeningtoreality.blogspot.com%2Fsearch%2Flabel%2FRobert%2520Dominik%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2FSvjkOyhsoe9oTA7mS7o1y8HFIUnEZIUYF81Ev8yhbHEFYnoE5HyBmjE&h=AT3cav343AP4Qr1B-dTE4cZZ6bKc4xbfAeqAggVlrUFaEh6_cT5jRuhz4gZN2zN4oYdgRj-DEuR5fV2Mk8-tgNAdT73gs3oCJU91zdpJDT9EtNtACuhjnvaHEkI3HMfXTw"

- Soh Wei Yu Also, after anatta you can also come to understand that the I AM is not in any way negated but only correctly understood, so this is in no way contradictory to Buddhism and anatta, in fact all the direct path traditions in Buddhism teaches one to realise I AM first (from thai forest to many forms of zen, dzogchen and mahamudra)

...

When I was practicing Self-Enquiry, John Tan told me to practice 'dropping' as well. Means as separate sessions -- morning practice self enquiry, at night practice dropping. However I personally skewed towards the self enquiry part.

That said, dropping is also important and the experience of intense luminosity without being accompanied by letting go (even of the radiance) can lead to other issues as mentioned above.

A rather balanced book I would think is “True Meditation” by Adyashanti that seems to incorporate both aspects. If you are practicing self-enquiry, do check out that book.

(1:34 AM) Thusness: you need to understand that even up to the phase of non-dual, is still not anatta and DO, so you must further refine your so called 'advaita vedanta' experiences :) but learn to drop, mind body and presence. at night learn how to drop. morning and after, practice vivid, non dual awareness

Fortunately my I AM phase was blissful, unlike John Tan who experienced energy imbalances and insomnia which is why he said after I AM one suffers more (in his experience). I didn't face those issues because I did not practice wrongly and focus on the wrong things - thanks to John Tan's guidance, instead I focused on the four aspects of I AM and transitioned into non dual and anatta smoothly over the next eight months.

Overfocusing on the third eye chakra (even if unknowingly, although also commonly taught by teachers) can also be problematic and dangerous, therefore it is advisable to always start from the dan tien/abdomen as base and one must circulate the energies.

...

Yes, Who am I? should be contemplated like a koan (not intellectual). Something that stumps your mind and results in direct and non-conceptual realization, like what is the sound of one hand clapping? And yet that koan leads to non dual, while who am I? leads to I AM.

Shamatha practices simply provides the prerequisite for a successful inquiry, because you can't inquire properly and realize Self if your mind is all over the place.

Ramana Maharshi's books go into all these, which I readily recommend to anyone keen on self-enquiry (other relevant authors include Michael A. Singer, Eckhart Tolle, John Wheeler, Galen Sharp, Adyashanti, etc). Ramana would first teach people to try Self Enquiry, but if one is not successful with these he would recommend other methods like breath control, surrendering, and so on. The purpose of these methods like breath-control should be to quieten the mind so that one can then return and abide as the Source through enquiry. "Be still and know that I AM God."

Someone asked, *“What do you mean by dropping?”*

Soh replied, “Release, relax, let go of everything.

2008:

(3:40 PM) Thusness: Yes. You are already experiencing "I AMness" and that is natural. :) That insight of non-duality will not come that easily. :) even glimpses after glimpses, it will not be obvious and clear. :) The most difficult task of all practice is 'letting go'. You can take life after life, you will not understanding the essence of it. though ultimately there is not even a letting go, with the sense of 'self', the essence will not be understood. so don't underestimate it. You must practice letting go. drop your body, mind... all. I told you to practice dropping right?
(3:43 PM) AEN: yes
(3:43 PM) Thusness: give up. give up everything... everything during your practice. in meditation just practice that. within that period of meditation, it should be fully and totally dedicated to giving up... of everything. whenever there is holding even the slightest sense, there is self. all thoughts, all teachings, everything, family, mind, life...let go. be a true monk in that period of meditation.
(3:45 PM) AEN: ya drop everything and be natural right, cos luminosity is like naturally present
(3:45 PM) Thusness: don't think of that when you are doing meditation, the letting go that I told you.
(3:46 PM) AEN: what you mean?
(3:46 PM) Thusness: if I want you to find out what is presence, I would not have told you 'letting go'. there is only total giving up. there is no intention even to find out what is presence, what is buddha nature.
(3:47 PM) AEN: but I still think I'm not very clear on presence
(3:47 PM) Thusness: did I tell you to do that, to find out what buddha nature is? you only have to give up everything, not to reason... initially you will want to understand....but keep this in mind and as a practice. to arise non-dual insight, these 2 practices must go hand in hand, but it will take years
(3:49 PM) AEN: oic
(3:50 PM) Thusness: Initially without fail, it will always appear as the background, the eternal witness. It is necessary and from there know the 'strength' of propensities."

Someone asked, *"Isnt letting go another form of grasping? Is it a concession to make as a practice until realization occurs? Kinda like effortful mindfulness."*

Soh replied,

"Letting go is not necessarily grasping. You can reach very deep levels of degrasping like John Tan Stage 3 without realizing anatta, but it becomes like a trance state samadhi, temporary.

There are different levels of dropping, the 5th and 6th requires anatta [to be effortless].

Six Stages of Dropping

First is 'someone' is dropping...
Second is dropping appears as a mirror reflecting...
Third is there is only endless dropping without footing and mental reasoning...

Fourth is dropping as vivid wide opening...
Fifth is vivid wide opening as everything...
Sixth is only Dharma spontaneously manifesting...

(by Thusness/PasserBy)

You must be able to sit for prolonged periods of time and have some mastery in shamatha/calm abiding meditation, stilling both mind and body."

Contemplative Practices to Focus On After I AM Realization

Focus on practicing and contemplating the four aspects of I AM and two nondual inquiries.

~ Four Aspects of I AM

Many people get stuck in the initial I AM realization without much progress for decades. Fortunately Soh was able to progress relatively quickly (8 months from I AM realization to non-dual and anatta) compared to John Tan and many others that Soh know, who got stuck for decades due to a lack of good pointers and directions for progress from experienced teachers.

For progress after I AM realization, John Tan taught me about the deepening of the "I AM" in 4 aspects: 1) the aspect of impersonality, 2) the aspect of the degree of luminosity, 3) the aspect of dissolving the need to re-confirm and abide in I AMness and understanding why such a need is irrelevant, 4) the aspect of experiencing effortlessness (John Tan: any form of clinging, be it Self/self or Presence, will prevent a practitioner from correctly experiencing 'effortlessness')

By focusing on these four aspects of I AM, then later going deeper into the two types of nondual contemplations, Soh was able to make swift progress into non-dual and anatta realization.

"4 aspects are simply pathing you towards non-dual when you are in the phase of ultimate presence." – John Tan, 2020

"You must also understand that the four aspects are conveyed to you so that in the event you get lost in "I Amness", they can lead you back to the deeper insight of anatta and DO [Dependent Origination]." - John Tan, 2011

2007:

(12:39 PM) Thusness: when impersonality steps in, the bond of the background, the perceiver is substantially reduced. Yeah, that is why he is willing to give up *[Soh: give up grasping and reifying]* the "I AM" now...

- **01 The Aspect of Impersonality;**

This is the case when practitioners experience that everything is an expression of a universal cosmic intelligence. There is therefore no sense of a personal doer... rather, it feels like I and everything is being lived by a higher power, being expressed by a higher cosmic intelligence. But this is still dualistic – there is still this sense of separation between a 'cosmic intelligence' and the 'world of experience', so it is still dualistic.

Soh experienced impersonality after the I AM realization, however some people experience it before I AM realization. Some of the Theistic Christians may not have I AM realization (it depends - although many Christian mystics including Jesus Christ (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/jesus-christ-cosmic-consciousness-alan.html) himself have pointed out the I AM realization), however through their surrendering to Christ, they can drop their sense of personal doership and experience the sense of 'being lived by Christ', as in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.". This is an experience of impersonality that may or may not come with the realization of I AM. And as Sailor Bob Adamson said, "That separate entity, the belief in that entity or person, has never done a damn thing! It never can and never will. You must realize that you have been lived. That body-mind that you call 'you' is being lived, and it is being lived quite effortlessly. As Christ said, 'Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit to his stature?' That separate entity can't do a bloody thing."

Also from Sailor Bob Adamson, "What I'm talking about is that same intelligence that functions the universe. The very fact that the stars can orbit or the planets can orbit around the earth and form out of the gases into the particular shape and form and hold that form implies an intelligence. That which keeps the seasons coming and going implies an intelligence. The tides coming in and out implies an intelligence. Look at it closely. It is beating your heart right now. It is growing your hair and your fingernails. It is digesting your food. It is replacing the cells in your body. The patterning and functioning of this body implies that there is a wonderful intelligence expressing through it, as it. And that is actually what you are—that intelligence-energy. It formed you, grew you and is continuing to grow you. It is replacing the cells in your body and doing other things naturally, the same as it is in the universe. But that natural state has seemingly been clouded over by the reasoning or the functioning of the mind. Look at the body and break it down. There is no center here in this body that I can say 'This is what I am'. It started with the sperm and the ovum coming together. If the body had any center it would be that original cell. But that is long since gone. There are many cells dying in this body right now and being replaced."

"The 'knock-out blow' was seeing the absence of a person. There is no such entity in the machine. There are only thoughts, experiences and objects arising and subsiding in awareness. There is no one controlling them and no one affected by them. Once this is seen, everything happens just as before, but the imagined person is removed from the film. The film goes on but there is no person starring in it. There are thoughts, but no thinker; actions, but no actor; choices, but no choice-maker. Basically, there is no difference from before, except the sense of separation is gone, along with the psychological suffering, confusion and doubt that appears along with the belief in a separate 'I'. There is no one at the controls. Life is happening; thoughts are arising; actions are occurring spontaneously. You, as a separate person, are not doing any of these things. You don't choose your thoughts, feelings, sensations. As Bob says, 'You are

being lived'." - John Wheeler, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2026/02/awakening-to-natural-state-by-john.html

"Thinking, seeing, living, breathing and so on all are going on just fine. The limited 'I' notion comes in as a subsequent concept. Just because you are not a limited, isolated, defec-tive person, why should any of the natural functioning stop? Life goes on just as before but without any reference to the assumed self-center. You say, 'Who or what is doing this sorting and selecting, coming and going? And since there is no "I", why not just not step back, stop, refuse to participate in the fake "I" game, and just let the river take its course?'

Who is there to step back? Who is present to refuse to participate? Who is there to let the river take its course? All appears in awareness and functions. The separate person is not. Your question implies that without a self-concept, no functioning is possible. That is not true. Which self-center is beating your heart? None! When you say 'Why not just step back?', you are bringing in a tacit reference to an entity with the capacity to do that. There is no one there to step back or refuse to play the game. The fake 'I' game, as you call it, is a fake game. When seen, it is all over. All your questions are really hanging on the assumed reality of the conceptual 'I': that it is either necessary for functioning, which is false, or that it is present to step back, refuse, not decide or whatever.

You say, 'There are decisions but no decider, doing but no doer, acting but no actor, thinking but no thinker'. This is it exactly. All these things are going on and will continue to do so. There is just no 'I' doing any of it. This is a descrip-tion of your own experience, even now. Seeing is happening. Thinking is happening. Later the mind comes in and posits an 'I' doing those things, but that 'I' is only a concept. The 'I' concept cannot see, think or do anything. Are 'you' beating your heart or growing your hair? Yet there is no problem with any of that functioning. It is the same with thoughts also. It is an illusion to think there is a 'you' manufacturing thought. Do you know what the next thought is going to be before it appears? No! Then how can you say 'you' created it? You cannot! And yet it happens just fine.

You ask, 'Why not just sit on a bench, blow smoke rings towards the sun and talk to the birds?' Yes, if there is any entity present to do that! If it happens it will happen; if not, not. Planning, deciding and functional activity do not imply or require a separate self concept. In fact, things fl ow better without that erroneous notion mucking up the works.

You say, 'How did those decisions get made without some kind of a reference point?' That is just it. It is a reference point, not who you are. Until people look into this, they are apt to confuse the reference point, which is a conceptual construct, with their actual identity. With the basic identity clear, you can use the reference point, if necessary, but not be used by it.

In all of this, have you left your true being at any time?" – John Wheeler, Clear in Your Heart, https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0125/1442/t/2/assets/clear-in-your-heart-sample.pdf

It should be noted that impersonality is not just an experience of non-doership. It is the dissolving of the construct of 'personal self' that led to a purging of ego effect to a state of clean, pure, not-mine sort of "perception shift", accompanied with a sense that everything and everyone is being expressions of the same aliveness/intelligence/consciousness. This can then be easily extrapolated into a sense of a 'universal source' (but this is merely an extrapolation and at a later phase is deconstructed) and one will also experience 'being lived' by this greater Life and Intelligence.

“Of course, make no mistake, from the point of view of the total Understanding this teaching about whether you are the doer is in fact redundant; the question does not even arise. With the Understanding comes the natural and spontaneous apperception that there is no one here no individual to either be the doer or not be the doer. So the question is moot. What you think of as yourself; the whole package of body, mind, personality, ego, sense of individuality, personal history; none of that even exists as such, as anything other than an idea, a story, a concept in Consciousness. The discussion of whether or not 'you' can be a doer or not is, as Wei Wu Wei writes, like discussing whether the bird in the empty cage is captive. The cage is empty! There is nobody home!

At the morning talks recently there has been a musician who plays traditional Indian flute for the group after the talks. The flute does not know music: it does not know 'G'from 'B flat;' it does not know tempo or emphasis, and cannot make music come out of itself: it's just a hollow bamboo stick with holes in it! It is the musician who has the knowledge and the skill and the intention and the dexterity, and whose breath blows through the instru-ment and whose fingers manipulate the openings so that beautiful music flows out. When the music is ended, no one congratulates the wooden stick on the music it made: it is the musician who is applauded and thanked for this beautiful gift of music.

It is precisely so with what we think of as our 'selves.'

We are instruments, hollow sticks, through which the Breath, the Spirit, the Energy which is Presence, All That Is, Consciousness, flows. Just as it is not the flute making the note, but the Musician making the note through the instrument, so it is the breath which is Presence which animates this mind and body and comes out through this mouth to make it seem that this mouth is speaking words. The basic misunderstanding, the basic ignorance, is this unwitting usurpation of the role of Musician by the instru-ment. This inversion of the truth is spontaneously realized when the Understanding occurs. It becomes obvious that there is no individual, that there is 'nobody home,'no entity’ here to be the doer or not. Because awakening is simply the Understanding that there is no one here to awaken.” – David Carse, Perfect Brilliant Stillness https://www.perfectbrilliantstillness.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Book-from-PerfectBrilliantStillness.org_.pdf

Impersonality will help dissolve the sense of self but it has the danger of making one attached to a metaphysical essence or to personify, reify and extrapolate a universal consciousness. It makes a practitioner feel "God". At this phase it is good to focus on this impersonal and universal aspect of consciousness, but beware of the tendency to extrapolate.

"...Next — and remarkably there is a next — we become aware of the other side of I Am, of the source from which it arises, within a stillness of surpassing quality. We see our I as a knot that blocks off the depths, a knot that makes itself the source of our will, intentions, choices, and decisions, including the intention to meditate in this moment. Gradually we loosen the knot until it gives way, until I let go entirely of being myself, of being my own source.

Until this point, our ascent has been into the depths within us. But always we have remained at the core of the experience, with the experience outside of us, of our core. Now we must empty that very core and open to what is deeper than our innermost center. We ourselves become the outside to the Sacred Will of the World, Who is our Source, and let that Will come through us, as us.

We inwardly prostrate ourselves, begging for reconnection, begging to become a part of that Greatness. Silently and wholeheartedly calling out to the Ultimate, completely and utterly opening the very kernel of who we are, we reach beyond the world of sacred light, into the unbounded emptiness, which is also an overflowing fullness, an intimacy with all, with the All.

This is the Sacred Will of the World,

Of Whom I am now a particle,

Who lends me the will to be myself,

Who lends me my I,

Who is my very Self,

Whom I hope to become able to serve by emptying myself unconditionally,

In Whom we are all united,

And Who continuously creates and sustains this universe in love.

This ultimate stage of the meditation comes only as an act of grace from Above. It lies well beyond our ability to make happen, although our emptiness, our surrender, and our love are necessary. Attempting to enter here, prayer may help. If you are so inclined, silently repeat one of God's names, one close to your heart, one that both expresses your yearning and brings you peace.

In closing the meditation, we climb back down Jacob's Ladder to return to our daily life, though somewhat changed inwardly. We come, in turn, back to the sacred light, back to the cognizant stillness of consciousness and the presence of I Am, back to sensation and relaxation, and thus back to the base of the ladder. We rest in awareness as the meditation settles in us." - Joseph Naft, A Meditation: Climbing Jacob's Ladder, https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/good-for-different-phasesaspects-of-i.html

"I AM the Tree of Life within you. My Life will and must push forth, but It will do it by gradual and steady growth. You cannot come into your fruitage before you have grown to it. Remember, My Life is all the time building you up into the perfection of health and strength and beauty, that must express outwardly as It is even now expressing within. You who have begun to realize I AM within, but have not yet learned to commune with Me, listen and learn now...

...Yes, this cell consciousness is common to every cell of every body, no matter what its kind, because it is an Impersonal consciousness, having no purpose other than doing the work allotted it. It lives only to work wherever needed. When through with building one form, it takes up the work of building another, under whatever consciousness I desire it to serve.

Thus it is likewise with you. You, as one of the cells of My Body, have a consciousness that is My Consciousness, an intelligence that is My Intelligence, even a will that is My Will. You have none of these for yourself or of yourself. They are all Mine and for My use only.

Now, My consciousness and My Intelligence and My Will are wholly Impersonal, and therefore are common with you and with all the cells of My Body, even as they are common with all the cells of your body.

I AM the directing Intelligence of All, the animating Spirit, the Life, the Consciousness of all matter, of all Substance. If you can see it, You, the Real you, the Impersonal you, are in all and are one with all, are in Me and are one with Me; just as I AM in you and in all, and thereby am expressing My Reality through you and through all.

This will, which you call your will, is likewise no more yours personally than is this consciousness and this intelligence of your mind and of the cells of your body yours. It is but that small portion of My Will which I permit the personal you to use. Just as fast as you awaken to recognition of a certain power or faculty within you and begin consciously to use it, do I allow you that much more of My Infinite Power.

All power and its use is but so much recognition and understanding of the use of My Will. Your will and all your powers are only phases of My Will, which I supply to suit your capacity to use it. Were I to entrust you with the full power of My Will, before you know how consciously to use it, it would annihilate your body utterly.

To test your strength and more often to show you what the misuse of My Power does to you, I at times allow you to commit a sin, so-called, or to make a mistake. I even permit you to become inflated with the sense of My Presence within you, when It manifests as a consciousness of My Power, My Intelligence, My Love; and I let you take these and use them for your own personal purposes. But not for long -- for, not being strong enough to control them, they soon take the bit in their teeth, run away with you, throw you down in the mire, and disappear from your consciousness for the time being.

Always I AM there to pick you up, after the fall, although you do not know it at the time; first straightening you out and then starting you onward again, by pointing out the reason for your fall; and finally, when you are sufficiently humbled, causing you to see that these powers accruing to you by the conscious use of My Will, My Intelligence and My Love, are allowed you only for use in My Service, and not at all for your own personal ends.

Do the cells of your body, the muscles of your arm, think to set themselves up as having a separate will from your will, or a separate intelligence from your intelligence? No, they know no intelligence but yours, no will but yours. After a while it will be that you will realize you are only one of the cells of My Body; and that your will is not your will, but Mine; that what consciousness and what intelligence you have are Mine wholly; and that there is no such person as you, you personally being only a physical form containing a human brain, which I created for the purpose of expressing in matter and Idea, a certain phase of which I could express best only in that particular form.

All this may be difficult for you now to accept, and you may protest very strenuously that it cannot be, that every instinct of your nature rebels against such yielding and subordinating yourself to an unseen and unknown power, however Impersonal or Divine.

Fear not, it is only your personality that thus rebels. If you continue to follow and study My Words, all will soon be made clear, and I will surely open up to your inner understanding many wonderful Truths that now are impossible for you to comprehend. Your Soul will rejoice sing glad praises, and you will bless these words for the message they bring...

...The proof of this is, man does not and cannot breathe of himself. Something far greater than his conscious, natural self lives in his body and breathes through his lungs. A mighty power within his body thus uses the lungs, even as it uses the heart to force the blood containing the life it drew through the lungs to every cell of the body; as it uses the stomach and other organs to digest and assimilate food to make blood, tissue, hair and bone; as it uses the brain, the tongue, the hands and feet, to think and say and do everything that man does."

- The Impersonal Life by Joseph Benner, a book on Christian Mysticisim emphasizing on the aspect of impersonality after I AM realization

"When we move from "I AMness" and mature the deconstruction of personality, we experience God-Like qualities. Seeing everything as one manifestation of 'One Life' and Presence being the same for everyone.

...just the isness without the individuality. Once this individuality is gone (Whether permanently or temporary), you will intuit that all as sharing the Source or as Manifestation of this Source. But that is not non-duality. That is impersonality. :) That is why you need to experience that too." - John Tan, 2009

"(6:06 PM) AEN: Eckhart Tolle: "Ultimately nothing is yours. you are giving energy because that energy whatever form comes from the source of all energies. all energies derives from one's source. so you allow yourself to be a vehicle in which this energy flows out into the world, and then the sense of me, the doer, isn't there,

and the sense that there is a poor person that i am helping isn't there either. so there is simply the process that happens through you. and that is the non egoic way, and to be of service is a beautiful practice because the ego is out of the way, and through

(6:06 PM) AEN: that you realize you don't own anything ultimately, and the energy is not yours, it's universal energy that comes through."

(10:14 PM) Thusness: In layman term yes

but what is this energy

(10:15 PM) Thusness: anyway, where you get this quote from?

(10:15 PM) AEN: i just watched a video by eckhart tolle just now, quoted from there

recent talk

(10:16 PM) AEN: the energy is simply life?

(10:16 PM) Thusness: icic... seems like he has moved from "I AM" to the "impersonality"

(10:16 PM) Thusness: there is always only life expressing, no you." - June 2010

"Session Start: Saturday, 5 June, 2010

(11:27 PM) Thusness: certainty of being when you focus on the 4 aspects till the peak and with right understanding, you will also have the same experience as anatta and emptiness. when you felt that the will of the source becomes your will, you become life itself, that is the same experience. actually all is the same experience except that buddhism provides the right understanding. in the experience of "I AM" and the article you posted about the divine, what is the peak of experience phase?

(11:48 PM) AEN: which article about divine?

Hmm im not sure

(11:49 PM) Thusness: the article about the source after "I AM"

(11:50 PM) AEN: is it like the 'sacred will of the world'

i mean the peak of experience

(11:51 PM) Thusness: after glimpses and realization of the source, when the divine will becomes your will. you must be able to experience every manifestation as the grace of divine will. so must understand this in terms of direct experience and right view. :) i will talk to you when we meet. do you know why there is the sensation of a 'divine will'?

(11:57 PM) AEN: bcos the sense of self is being let go... and its seen that everything is spontaneously arising from the source

(11:58 PM) Thusness: and what is this 'source' that seems to be doing the work?

(11:59 PM) AEN: consciousness, life?

(11:59 PM) Thusness: isn't "I AM" the consciousness?

(12:00 AM) AEN: ya but at the beginning it still feels like an individuated sense of presence... but then later its seen as more impersonal, like everything is merely the expression of the source

(12:00 AM) Thusness: first you must understand the separation is due to dualistic thought, thought separates. do you know what is the 'divine' will? the sensation due to "the sense of self is being let go... and its seen that everything is spontaneously arising from the source" causes the 'divine will'

(12:02 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:03 AM) Thusness: what is the divine will?
(12:03 AM) AEN: it means its happening due to the divine source, nothing is happening due to an individual will/agent/doer
(12:04 AM) Thusness: when someone hit the bell, anything due to divine will?
(12:05 AM) AEN: its also divine will bcos there is ultimately no separate person who acts, and no separate person who experience.. everything is manifested by the divine will... including every action that is spontaneously arising
(12:05 AM) Thusness: when someone hit the bell, anything so divine?
(12:05 AM) AEN: it's a manifestation of consciousness
(12:05 AM) Thusness: no good no good. because of the lack of understanding of your nature. your nature is empty. what is this divine will? it is just DO [dependent origination]. because we think in terms of entity and the 'weight of this dualistic and inherent' tendencies makes us feel separate and inherent. instead of seeing 'DO', we see it as divine will. not knowing empty nature, we mistaken DO for divine will. not knowing no-self nature, we thought we are independent. when no-self is fully experienced and insight of anatta rises, you do not feel source as separated from 'you'
there is merely manifestation, empty luminosity. empty as in DO and therefore does not require 'divine will', yet all manifests due to empty nature, effortless and spontaneous. there is conditions that are required for manifestations. a 'divine will' is not necessary
(12:11 AM) AEN: icic..
(12:12 AM) Thusness: when a practitioner realizes no-self and anatta insight arises, he clearly sees conditions. there is no divine will to listen to, but whenever condition is, manifestation is. slowly understand this. do not see DO as something dead. see it as direct manifestation of your breathe just like you experience everything as the grace of this divine will. feel this grace of life everywhere. letting go of yourself completely and feel this life
(12:18 AM) AEN: oic.. i am writing my experience to lzls lol
(5:36 PM) Thusness: Lol. In Chinese

(6:12 PM) Thusness: the second experience is more of 天地同根，万物同体. (tian di tong gen, wan wu tong ti: heaven and earth have one root, ten thousand phenomena have the same substance)
(6:12 PM) Thusness: clouded by '我相' (wo xiang, self image, egoity)
(6:12 PM) AEN: what do you mean
(6:13 PM) Thusness: means the second experience is more of a realization on the same source.
much like ?
(6:13 PM) AEN: oic..
why you said clouded by wo xiang
(6:15 PM) Thusness: ? (xiang, image) is simply a construct. That is from a dualistic point of view, being 'connected' must always be the case. When you de-contruct personality, you merely discover. a practitioner must also be aware of the 'weight' of these constructs. from an empty point of view, when the tendency is there, it is also not right to say that the interconnected state is always there, always the case. Obviously 'you' are not 'connected'. when the 'construct' is strong, there is no such experience or when the 'personality' is there, there is no experience of '万物同体' (everything

has the same substance/source). Or 'personality' is that very experience of individuality and therefore cannot have any experience of same 'source'. get it?
(6:19 PM) AEN: ic.. ya
(6:19 PM) Thusness: the former does not realize the causes and conditions for any arising. when we say it is always 'there' we are having 'absolute view'. If we cling to that, then that will prevent clear seeing. So what is the experience of 'individuality' like? it is the very experience of what practitioner before the 'connection' feel and understand. that is a state of reality, cannot be said to be determined or not.
(6:21 PM) AEN: oic.. what you mean by that is a state of reality cannot be said to be determined or not
(6:22 PM) AEN: hmm i think i get what you mean. so one must deconstruct the individuality otherwise there is no feeling of connection
(6:22 PM) Thusness: yes. for personality is the very state of individuality. what i want you to understand is not to have a pre-determined state.
(6:26 PM) AEN: ic... that means according to conditions we experience the connection, but its not always there?
(6:27 PM) Thusness: yes it is better to understand that way

(6:28 PM) Thusness: now when you experience certainty of being, you only experience the undeniability of your existence. doubtless, certain and present. but being connected to the source is different. it will also determine your later phase of practice. if you are attached to the Presence, what happened?
(6:31 PM) AEN: hmm. you mean when you are attached to Presence you will have difficulty seeing the connection?
(6:31 PM) Thusness: you wanted the state of Presence to transcend to the 3 states (waking, dreaming and sleeping) for you are only interested in that Certainty of Being. whereas when you realized the source, you don't do that. you are surrendering much like the christian. you are devoting. nothing is important besides serving the divine. sustaining the state of presence and devoting to a divine source is different. you sleep when it is time to sleep. whatever thy will is. in Presence, you still think of control, in surrendering, you realized you are being lived. Awareness is being done. it is almost the opposite, but then there is also the integration
(6:35 PM) AEN: oic.. Actually i think if we let go of control completely the presence is also naturally there, there is no need to try to control presence
(6:36 PM) Thusness: if you think that, that becomes a hindrance
(6:36 PM) AEN: oic how come
(6:36 PM) Thusness: coz you are torn in between. you are serving 2 masters. :P Presence and source. but then there is also the integration where divine will becomes your will. then in jacob ladder meditation, after realization and experience of the grace, it must be found everywhere. therefore you return to phase 1 of the ladder with new understanding. you are directly and intuitively experiencing all manifestations as the expression of life. where you and the divine become one, where phenomena and the divine becomes indistinguishable, as transient, as inner and outer world
(6:40 PM) AEN: oic..
(6:40 PM) Thusness: however that is because we are trying to express and understand this in an inherent and dualistic way. we speak in such a way because we are using a dualistic paradigm. and the experience seems difficult to reconcile and become seamless. so you must arise insight. you realized, what you call Self/self is just a label. this is very difficult to understand. then you are not trapped in 'reconnection' or surrendering.

You realized there is no-self *(Soh: Thusness Stage 4 and 5)*. whatever experienced is vividly present and aliveness everywhere because what that 'blocks' is no more there through the arising insight. now how clear are you in directly experiencing sensation? in experiencing sound, color, sight, taste? the mind at present is more interested in the behind reality. so anatta transform the experience of individuality through insight, clear seeing. there is a difference in saying what you call Awareness has always been sight, sound, the scent of fragrance... and there is Awareness and there is sound, sight, taste... when you see and mature your insight of anatta, it is realized that wrong view is what that is causing the problem. however after that, you must practice directly
(6:48 PM) AEN: what do you mean practice directly
(6:48 PM) Thusness: means you don't think theoretically too much after the arising insight of anatta, there is a difference between thinking that a Weather truly exist and the changing clouds, the rain exist inside weather. get it? so when you took that to be real, it creates the problem of reification and intensifying the inherent existence of Self. if there is no-weight to the constructs, then there would be no problem. unfortunately, constructs are like spells. :)
(6:51 PM) AEN: oic..
(6:52 PM) Thusness: do you get what i meant? just experience first. feel this aliveness everywhere. in other words, what you realized is beyond ? (xiang4: [imputed] appearance), but you do not understand the impact of ? (xiang4: [imputed] appearance). anyway you can send your article to your lzls for comments. :)" - June, 2010

"There is a vast impersonal natural intelligence which is living you, or rather, it IS this life, this breathing, this walking, this drinking... this life of the universe, of the earth spinning, ... all an interconnected play of Dharma, of total life, intelligence, and awareness. The only blockage is simply this sense of an 'I', someone who controls will and dictates actions in life.

If you think that I am sounding like an advocate of 'God', I have to reiterate that this so called 'God' or intelligent Mind is empty of its own existence apart from Dharma, is not something changeless and independent, and is not some sort of source acting behind the scenes or pulling the strings. Because this vast impersonal intelligence is so magnificent, powerful and impersonal, it can give the impression that we are all just the dream or expression of a Universal Mind of God, and if we follow this 'personification' and 'reification' we may start to think whether we are living in a matrix, a dream of Shiva for no other reason than his own enjoyment. But we are not the play or lila of a Brahman, there is no need to personify or reify this at all. This intelligence IS the miracle of manifestation. The divine has no face of its own, and yet every face is the face of divinity. There is no I, no perceiver, or a controller of this spontaneous intelligent happening. Living this is living in complete ecstasy and joy born of this total intelligence, life and clarity." - Soh, 2015, Vast Impersonal Intelligence (Note: I wrote this post-anatta insight, therefore there is no more reification of this impersonal intelligence into universal consciousness)

John Tan wrote in 2005 on the phases of I AM into impersonality:

Thusness: « Reply #7 on Jan 3, 2005, 10:04pm » Hi omsairam,

You are such a sincere seeker but do not get trap into too much analysis.

When one first experienced Total Presence, how clear and vivid it was.
But when the experience descended into thought-level, It became "I am I", the name of Yaweh.
And later a metaphysical Self, either way up above or deep down in us.
Eventually the 'I' becomes a tiny conscious being living inside our body seeking union with God that is DEEP down in us.
And the beginning of all confusions and divisions.

When we made progress by taking the 'I' out for a moment and transform "I am I" into "Amness", subject and object temporarily becomes one.
Then We begin to wonder, how does God get slip outside and become IT?
Has it always been an "IT" and never was an enclosed "I"?
Was it always Suchness, Thusness, Isness?
If you like thinking, think about it until you exhault the entirety of your thinking mechanism.
Until you are willing to let go. Completely let go of the illusionary 'I' and see our true nature.

The mind travels to and fro in an unbelievable speed, playing multiple roles, one as You and the other as God.
It plays hide and seek as long as we continue to adopt the method of analysis.

Can the ultimate Subject be made an Object of observation?
God is within and without, it cannot be contained.

It is the current mode of thinking and understanding God that is at fault.
As long as Reality is concerned, it is the wrong tool to use.
Analysis is the way of comparison and measurement, it is dual.
The Luminous Light 'knows' not through analysis.

'Knowing' to the Mystic is not to make an object in mind and study it.
It is "knowing" through oneness, it is "knowing" through Beingness.
It is losing yourself and finding itself in otherness.
It is an entirely different art -- Merely reflecting and simply IS.
If we are resistant to the idea of dropping the 'How' and 'What', then the path of faith and total submission towards God is preferred.
If we love God, do not analyse him, we are slaying him.

The mysterious gate is ever open in the HERE and NOW.
To experience in full, let go completely and leave not a trace of ourselves.

Thusness

- **02 The Intensity of Luminosity**

The degree of luminosity refers to feeling with entire being, feel wholly and directly without thoughts. Feeling 'realness' of whatever one encounters, the tree bark, the sand, etc. As with Impersonality, one may experience this even before the I AM realization. I (Soh) did. However one should practice to experience this aspect further after the I AM realization. This will also serve as one of the conditions for further non-dual insight. (You will also need to engage in nondual contemplation - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/two-types-of-nondual-contemplation.html - see below)

This aspect will come by practicing Vipassana, see John's Vipassana - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/thusnesss-vipassana.html and Vipassana - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/09/vipassana.html

“It will be advisable to take a step back to re-visit and re-experience each of the 6 sense doors. To cultivate a little on the aspect of being 'bare' for all the senses. Experience as much vividness as possible and have clarity on the luminous aspect of awareness first. Touch, taste, smell and sound... are all equally vivid as compared to seeing. Experience the texture and fabric of awareness. The rest of the conditions that give rise to no-self will come later. :) There is no ‘willful’ entrance into non-duality, create enough conditions, that’s all. :)” - John Tan, 2007

“When we experience Awareness directly without using our thoughts, everything is experienced as having a magical, alive, shimmery, fresh, amazing and blissful quality to it. Life is not the 'boring and ordinary' as the mind interprets it, even the most ordinary things (such as eating, walking, etc) just feels awesome. You will be naturally attracted, pulled towards the pristine awareness than to stressful thoughts. The ego will melt in the wonder and majesty of awareness.” - Soh, 2009

“I was awakened by the chirping of a bird outside the window. I had never heard such a sound before. My eyes were still closed, and I saw the image of a precious diamond. Yes, if a diamond could make a sound, this is what it would be like. I opened my eyes. The first light of dawn was filtering through the curtains. Without any thought, I felt, I knew, that there is infinitely more to light than we realize. That soft luminosity filtering through the curtains was love itself. Tears came into my eyes. I got up and walked around the room. I recognized the room, and yet I knew that I had never truly seen it before. Everything was fresh and pristine, as if it had just come into existence. I picked up things, a pencil, an empty bottle, marveling at the beauty and aliveness of it all.

That day I walked around the city in utter amazement at the miracle of life on earth, as if I had just been born into this world.

For the next five months, I lived in a state of uninterrupted deep peace and bliss. After that, it diminished somewhat in intensity, or perhaps it just seemed to because it became my natural state. I could still function in the world, although I realized that nothing I ever did could possibly add anything to what I already had.

...

In your everyday life, you can practice this by taking any routine activity that normally is only a means to an end and giving it your fullest attention, so that it becomes an end in itself. For example, every time you walk up and down the stairs in your house or place of work, pay close attention to every step, every movement, even your breathing. Be totally present. Or when you wash your hands, pay attention to all the sense perceptions associated with the activity: the sound and feel of the water, the movement of your hands, the scent of the soap, and so on. Or when you get into your car, after you close the door, pause for a few seconds and observe the flow of your breath. Become aware of a silent but powerful sense of presence. There is one certain criterion by which you can measure your success in this practice: the degree of peace that you felt within." - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

"I was walking through the park on my way home when something happened. Something holy arose from within and took over. I was standing there looking out at the trees and the grass like it was the first time I was seeing them. I was looking at my hands and feeling my body as it moved and I was marvelling at being alive and being in this body. I was acutely aware of being in the world, that I was a separate being in the world. I was enjoying all this as a child would enjoy a new and novel experience. I went over to a tree and grabbed a branch, I touched it softly and then grabbed it firmly, I really wanted to feel the tree, I really wanted to be there with it, to be present, to feel and see and take it all in. I bent down and touched the trunk near the roots, it was very real, very solid to my touch, it felt very alive. I noticed some bare earth around the tree trunk and picked up a chunk and broke it in my hand and watched and felt it crumble and stream through my fingers as it fell down to the earth. I was feeling so primal, so alive, I went around to the other side of the tree where the branches were a little higher off the ground and squatted under the branches near the tree trunk and put my hand on the trunk and left it there. I was feeling the roots and feeling extremely rooted myself in being. I stayed there for a few minutes, the feelings arising were so intense and overwhelming that tears were streaming down my face. Finally I left the tree and moved closer to the bench and sat and watched the crescent moon in the clear blue sky, there was a very bright star right beside it, so bright that I thought it might be the headlight of a plane heading towards me. I sat there and watched this scene and marvelled at life and being alive.

I finally got up and was going to go inside but I had to walk by the sandbox and I was immediately attracted to the sand. I bent down and started letting the sand run through my fingers, feeling the texture of the grains on the skin of my hand. I dug deeply into the sand and noticed that the sand was very damp when you dug down 3 or 4 inches. And then I found a flat stone. I don't know why this was so fascinating but I was like a little child, I would pick up the stone with a handful of sand and squeeze the sand so it would run through my fingers and then I would feel the hard stone pressing against the flesh of my palm and fingers. It was like finding a treasure, I did this over and over again.

I left the sandbox and moved over to a very large pine tree and grabbed on the branches really hard. I gave a really good pull on it and ripped that piece of branch clean off and allowed the needles to run through my fingers as they fell through the ground. I grabbed two branches, and held on really tight like I was holding hands with the pine tree, I looked up at it and was just present with it for a little while. But things were beginning to feel really intense inside of me so I went inside.

I went in the bedroom to change and got undressed, but when I was completely undressed I was drawn down to my knees and I bent very low with my forehead against the carpet. The energy was flowing like crazy inside, it felt like it was all emanating from the gut area. My head was on the carpet and my gut was much higher since I was still on my knees, this felt right as it had so many times before. Energy was flowing from my gut down through my head and out. But the energy also radiated outwards in all directions at the same time, like a sacred sun was shining in my gut. It was extremely intense and overwhelming and continued for at least 15 minutes.

I have no idea what is going on and I don't care. It feels very right and it makes everything sacred, my own body, and everything else in the world. It's almost a mystical experience at times to be alive.

I'm completely filled by this experience, it's overflowing.

I love you." - Din Robinson, the person to whom John Tan originally wrote the Thusness Stages in 2006

Soh, 2020:

"Someone (Olivier Sandilands) sent me this description and asked me to 'diagnose' it for him. I told him this is what I call intensity of luminosity, check out AtR guide on it. However he has not experienced or realised anatta, so it remains a glimpse. The peak of its intensity is when the sense of self completely dissolves into a state of no mind (no sense of subjectivity), but even then it remains an experience until realisation.

After dissolution of self/Self through realisation of anatman, this intensity of luminosity is experienced all moments at its peak, it is my everyday effortless natural state.

"At noon, after getting up and waiting for the bell to call us up for lunch, I kept an extremely relax and extremely sharp investigation of objects of perception going while sitting on a bench. Opening my eyes, I looked at one of my fellow retreatants walking back to her room. This was astounding. I don't really know how to explain it, but I believe I was experiencing emptiness in real time. It was absolutely clear that there was no past and future in that immediate experience : though she was obviously changing position, her movement was not of time. It was utter immanence, eternity : she was moving, and everything around her was moving ; yet nothing was moving. In fact, she didn't exist, and yet existed more than ever. Something angelic.

I got up, went to get my food. As I looked upon the face of some of my fellow meditators, I was struck by two profound things : first, I was perceiving them in such detail and in such a light, that they appeared like universes, like infinite things which had nothing to do with anything else ; each one of them was a miracle, right here in front of me, indistinct from me, of the same fabric. This brought about deep compassion and love, which moves me to tears now as I write about it. As I was eating, in silence, my visual perception was deepening. It was already quite astounding, in detail and brightness.

But now, looking at my fork, it was starting to really bloom in a crazy way. My forkful of dahl was the most beautiful and rich thing I had ever seen. In fact, as I was letting that develop itself, myself just trying to relax into it, it felt as if visual perception started to open, that I started to dissolve into it ; it felt like something untangled in the back, and that everything got bigger. It felt like a free fall into a world of unexpected richness, of a transfigured nature, timeless, the

same as ever, yet totally different, raw, vivid, inescapably rich. In fact, this started to get freaky. I stopped the process. I felt some fear, but it was confined to a tiny perception of my heart beating in the chest. I decided to chill out. But something had flipped. It was this : reality, become REAL. I now understand what realization must mean. Just that : reality become completely real.

For about two hours I explored the premices, walking around the pond, into the forest, etc. It was completely surreal, psychedelic. Visual perception was totally illuminated : every object that had some kind of brightness or movement was emitting intense light in the whole of my visual field. It was like the experience I described earlier, x10, with an added depth to spatial perception that was astounding. Furthermore, I could "freeze" perception on command by stilling it on a particular object, which would start to acquire the same "transfigured" quality I described. The same, yet totally different, totally new, totally immanent : direct perception, pure unfolding of shapes and colors bound by nothing, flux.

Emotionnally, I felt a mix of elation, incredulity, great amusement and mild background panic. What the hell was that ?? I skipped meditation to go lie down. Was this a side effect of my ear infection ? Was it the first phases of a visual migraine ? Have I gone nuts ? None of these... I talked with another meditator in the hallway of one of the buldings. The best way I can describe it is : it was like a conversation on mdma. The kind where one is both profoundly calm, at ease in a supernatural way (nothing can touch me), yet extremely sharp, loving and energetic. Visual perception was so sharp, in particular, any reflecion in the field of vision, particularly the periphery, was perceived as a glowing neonish light. The face of that man was beautiful to look at : shimmering with light, detailed, with a background sense of eternity infusing the whole of perception... Man. Powerful."" (Note by Soh: it is important to understand the the terms ‘Emptiness’ and ‘Realization’ used here is very different from how AtR uses these terms. This person’s experience has more to do with the intensity of luminosity aspect, it has nothing to do with realizing the empty nature)

"I have already told you that in non-dual, especially anatta, the same sacredness you find in the background is also found in the transience. Identification is getting lost in the story or content. Not to deny yourself the clarity of the essence and nature of the phenomena and aggregates. You do not resort to a background from disidentification. But from disidentification, realize the essence and nature of the aggregates in its primordial and pure state. When you do that, you are dis-associating. When you dis-identify from your body, you free yourself from the 'inherent aspect of the body construct' but is having a full vivid experience of the sensations." - John Tan, early 2010 after my I AM realization

"(10:33 PM) Thusness: Self inquiry is a form of meditation like koan. The purpose is to have a direct experience of our inner most essence called 'Self'. The next step is to bring this 'Self' into the foreground. That requires vipassana meditation. It is the key towards non-dual. Even after non-dual, we have to practice vipassana but the focus is in being 'bare'. By being 'bare', it becomes mirror like, pristine, clear and luminous.

(10:45 PM) Thusness: the next step is to bring this [Presence] into the foreground by practicing bare attention of our body sensations.

(12:38 AM) Thusness: When we first experience the Eternal Witness, it is non-dual, presence, very real, it is the Reality. at that moment the experience is non-dual. When we come to understand it, it becomes dual. We understood

it wrongly but we think that it is right. Therefore it appears to be 'there', still, unchanging, wherever is. In actual fact, we are abstracting the characteristics of 'pristine clarity' from a moment of arising and call it Presence. It is the mind doing the abstraction.
(12:40 AM) Thusness: this is a tendency that is dividing. That is why vipassana is taught. Observing all arising sensation.
(12:40 AM) Thusness: that sensation is already Awareness itself. otherwise, self enquiry instead of vipassana would be taught and there is no point observing sensation. To be bare is to understand sensation in its pristineness, its luminosity that when it is bare. yet it is impermanent." - John Tan, 2009

See John's Vipassana - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/thusnesss-vipassana.html and Vipassana - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/09/vipassana.html and read this book Gesture of Awareness

Eckhart Tolle describing the intensity of luminosity in the body in The Power of Now: “Connecting With The Inner Body

Please try it now. You may find it helpful to close your eyes for this practice. Later on, when "being in the body' has become natural and easy, this will no longer be necessary. Direct your attention into the body. Feel it from within. Is it alive? Is there life in your hands, arms, legs, and feet - in your abdomen, your chest? Can you feel the subtle energy field that pervades the entire body and gives vibrant life to every organ and every cell? Can you feel it simultaneously in all parts of the body as a single field of energy? Keep focusing on the feeling of your inner body for a few moments. Do not start to think about it. Feel it. The more attention you give it, the clearer and stronger this feeling will become. It will feel as if every cell is becoming more alive, and if you have a strong visual sense, you may get an image of your body becoming luminous. Although such an image can help you temporarily, pay more attention to the feeling than to any image that may arise. An image, no matter how beautiful or powerful, is already defined in form, so there is less scope for penetrating more deeply.

The feeling of your inner body is formless, limitless, and unfathomable. You can always go into it more deeply. If you cannot feel very much at this stage, pay attention to whatever you can feel. Perhaps there is just a slight tingling in your hands or feet. That's good enough for the moment. Just focus on the feeling. Your body is coming alive. Later, we will practice some more. Please open your eyes now, but keep some attention in the inner energy field of the body even as you look around the room. The inner body lies at the threshold between your form identity and your essence identity, your true nature. Never lose touch with it.”

John Tan replied in 2006, “The experience comes when the 'self' subsides and awareness is experienced as a vibrantly luminous bright clarity. The radiance of pure awareness creates a powerful sense of Presence that is experienced in the form of aliveness and clarity in all parts of the body. If you were to visualize it, it is like a very powerful inner light radiating out from nowhere to everywhere making everything that comes into contact alive.”

John Tan, early August 2010:

(12:49 AM) Thusness: do you feel like a luminous light?
(12:50 AM) AEN: yes, awareness is radiant and present
(12:50 AM) Thusness: u need to lose that sense of self first. you will not feel like radiance light with your current realization [Soh: that was spoken during my I AM phase of realization], only when you mature impersonality and non-dual. how did dharma dan describe pce?
(1:32 AM) AEN: i think he said something like pure delight in the senses, the physical, etc. i think he also talked about no sense of movement or fluxing?
(1:33 AM) Thusness: he said radiance, brilliance and luminous. the senses and physical. when the background and foreground are both experienced as so. there will be radiance throughout, then it is possible to talk about luminous radiance. otherwise what you experience is still far from it. there must be total transparency, and there be the experience of purity, primordial, radiance in whatever arises. you may also visualize radiance light vitalizing all your cells like what eckhart tolle said.
(1:37 AM) AEN: oic.. what eckhart tolle said is like non dual?
(1:37 AM) Thusness: yes. but he isn't clear about that, though the experience is there

[Comments by Soh: Eckhart Tolle's insight is more into I AM, Thusness Stage 1 and 2]

John TanThursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:21pm UTC+10

do you have the experience of a transparent inner emanation?
Soh Wei YuThursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:21pm UTC+10

do you mean outwards emanation? or something else
John TanThursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:22pm UTC+10

yeah, like a transparent energetic glowing light emanating outward?
Soh Wei YuThursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:29pm UTC+10

transparent luminosity yeah

John TanThursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:29pm UTC+10

actually you don't need to meditate...just mature your insights and experience in daily activities [Soh: important - this comment was made 2+ years after my anatta realization, so do note that the I AM realization is insufficient to experience nondual luminosity in all manifestations in an effortless manner]

if it becomes stable...visualize light and experience that taste as a skillful practice
Soh Wei YuThursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:30pm UTC+10

how to visualize light
John TanThursday, May 30, 2013 at 10:31pm UTC+10
not how...you must have that taste...like inner light emanating out... like a form of radiance...then visualize that as if it is healing your entire being and body, into boundlessness as a skillful way of practice

“Soh Wei Yu

021haS0h7cnsorfe9 ·

Shared with Your friends

This is one of the four aspects of I AM, that John and I call 'intensity of luminosity'...

"One of the ways Brilliancy is useful for the Work of essential realization relates to intensity, or amplitude. When essential presence has the aspect of Brilliancy, you experience that the voltage is suddenly raised in all the processes going on inside you. Brilliancy gives a radiance to all manifestations, including your mind and body. Your processes become more radiant, more brilliant, which means that they become purer and more themselves. When Brilliancy is experienced and realized, one’s process accelerates. It has a magnifying effect, an empowering effect, on everything within your field. It is as if your essence were getting a shot in the arm. It makes everything more alive, more luminous, and in a sense, more itself. Everything functions better, more efficiently, more accurately, more to the point. Brilliancy exists on its own—it independently functions as intelligence —but it also magnifies the functioning of everything else. And yet what characterizes the actual nature of Brilliancy is its direct presence in the soul, which then manifests in the thoughts and actions of that person in the world." - A H Almaas, Brilliancy: the Essence of Intelligence (I was reading a sample of this book - the first two chapters today and I particularly copied out this excerpt, and then later I found out this same exact excerpt can be found here https://www.diamondapproach.org/glossary/refinery_phrases/brilliancy)

This book is still more of the I AM and one mind sort of understanding, unlike his most recent books which talks about anatta and total exertion also.
1 Comment

Soh Wei Yu

Luminous Intelligence

The true essential quality of Brilliancy is a living quality to the consciousness that is aware and present. It has a sense of a luminous kind of intelligence that will affect our capacities in terms of seeing, perceiving, and also understanding and apprehending. The effect on the aesthetic sense—the elegance and the purity—is just beautiful. It makes us, our sense

of presence, our life, and the environment, have a quality that is spiritual. It is actually more real than just calling it divine or spiritual. It attains an immaculate quality. Everything becomes more itself in a very pure, radiant way.

Brilliancy, pg. 183

-

o Reply

o 2h”

- **03 Dissolving the Need to Return or Abide in I AM**

There are two tendencies after I AM realization which are pitfalls that prevent effortless and total Presence, although the second is more helpful than the first:

a) Attempting to re-confirm the ever-presence of Awareness through reasoning
b) Attempting to abide in Presence

Dissolving the need to re-confirm is important as whatever is done is an attempt to distance itself from itself, if there is no way one can distant from the "I AM", furthermore the attempt to abide in it is itself an illusion.

However, abiding in presence is a form of meditative practice, like chanting, and leads to absorption. It can result in the oceanic experience. So although it is a pitfall that prevents effortless and non-dual experience of Presence (this requires deeper insights) and is a form of efforting, abiding in Presence through samadhi is a form of development after I AM realization. But once one focuses on the 4 aspects discussed here, one will have that experience of oceanic Presence too.

“How still, how silent, how oceanic and immense is that moment of authentication of I AM is crucial.”

- John Tan, 2020

On the other hand, attempting to re-confirm the ever-presence of Awareness through reasoning (reasoning to oneself that Presence-Awareness is always here regardless of what experiences arise) is a retrogression from the I AM realization (which is direct certainty without inference), instead of any kind of development. The following conversation explains why.

Conversation with John Tan while Soh was in his I AM phase:

“John Tan: what is the difference before and after the realization of "I AM"?

Soh: a non conceptual certainty that does not come from inference, words, concepts
*certainty of being
John Tan: This certainty is unshakeable at that moment of realization.
Complete, Done, Still, Perfect, Pure, non-dual , Non-conceptual, primordial
Soh: yea
John Tan: Yet it doesn't seem 'there' anymore. Though intuitively it can't be lost, but this clarity despite the realization does not stay.
Soh: yeah..
John Tan: why so?
Soh: Because of conceptual thoughts... the I AM experience is a non conceptual direct authentication, just abiding as that
John Tan: why does conceptual thought arise?
Soh: By habit mostly
John Tan: now... have you seen through the illusion and power of 'thoughts'?
Soh: I can see that thoughts are illusory... yet when I get lost in thoughts it still seems real and powerful. That's why suffering still arise
John Tan: I remember reading something you said you read somewhere.. that the only problem is 'thought'. Because it becomes a 'reality' to the mind. Suggestion is very real to the mind to consciousness, so how does problem arise? This is important... if you can't understand this, it is difficult for you to progress and understand deeper. You cannot have 'problems' if you do not react to the content of 'thoughts'...
Soh: yeah.. we invest meaning and invest identity to our thoughts. I wrote about 'What's wrong with right now unless you think about it?'. It's when we label and give meaning to things that there are problems, otherwise there are just wordless vibrations, even thoughts are wordless
John Tan: yes, and problems includes confusions. Now in the direct mode, is there confusion?
Soh: no
John Tan: Is any explanation needed?
Soh: no
John Tan: Is any re-confirmation needed?
Soh: no
John Tan: Now if I were to ask you about source, is there any differentiation in that mode? You do not differentiate between source or you. There is no such differentiation... but when you are out of that mode, you seek explanation. You attempt to re-confirm, and your way is by explaining to yourself. This very act itself already distant itself from the direct and immediate mode. Get it? You made the mistake after the realization of "I AM". So does Mr. T. There is no why, no because,...no matter how logical it sounds, how much sense it makes, it is irrelevant, and from that [Soh: i.e. when comparing the logical reasoning process to direct realization] quality of experience in your realization, it is completely off the mark...
...actually ramana maharshi only tell you to abide in the Self. There is no explanation, just the abiding. However, that is not the way though it is better than explanation... hahaha.

Is surrendering a form of 'explanation'?
Soh: no
John Tan: It is just a quality of non-dual experience... a direct, immediate, non-dual, pure and non-conceptual experience that is still, complete and entire. Nothing matters in that mode. It is not about reading or no reading. If I don't explain to you, how are you to know? It is about getting into that mode and not falling into the trap. If you want to re-live the experience, you cannot approach that way. Read my article on anatta (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html), I have already said it must be a more direct mode. In hearing, just sound, this is an experiential fact. You may describe the experience, you do not ask why in hearing, just sound. Or in hearing there is just sound because..... this and that... get it?"

As John Tan also wrote in 2009, "...Awakening to the 'Watcher' will at the same time 'open' the 'eye of immediacy'; that is, it is the capacity to immediately penetrate discursive thoughts and sense, feel, perceive without intermediary the perceived. It is a kind of direct knowing. You must be deeply aware of this "direct without intermediary" sort of perception -- too direct to have subject-object gap, too short to have time, too simple to have thoughts. It is the 'eye' that can see the whole of 'sound' by being 'sound'. It is the same 'eye' that is required when doing vipassana, that is, being 'bare'. Be it non-dual or vipassana, both require the opening of this 'eye of immediacy'".

"Question: Once again, I am trapped in mind trying to see and solve the mystery! The thing I am trying to understand is how awareness can see and recognize itself. But my conclusion is that it cannot. The only thing is to stay with the seeing and just be, and see the false as false.

John Wheeler: Awareness—or what you are—is. It is a fact. You cannot doubt that you are, that you are present. Being is. To try to know it, understand it, grasp it or express it is coming in at the mind level. It is a false game, because your very existence does not need to be known, understood or grasped. All of those activities are going on 'downstream', within the non- conceptual awareness that you are. Who is trying to know, understand and grasp? Only the assumed, fictitious 'I' itself.
You say, 'The only thing is to stay with the seeing and just be, and see the false as false'. Who? The only thing — for whom? Who is to stay with seeing, when you are nothing but the seeing itself? Knock out any residual reference to some separate 'me' and where is the problem and who has it? Your statement is really a subtle reference to the old ghost of the 'me'. You are not a 'me' with any task to do. You are non- conceptual existence-awareness itself now — and now — and now.
If the mind is looping, it is only doing so in the space of open awareness. No one is there, only this. You are that." - Clear in Your Heart, John Wheeler, https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0125/1442/t/2/assets/clear-in-your-heart-sample.pdf

Aditya Prasad
If it makes you feel any better, I've been stuck in "I AM" for over three decades 😆. After reading (parts of) AtR, I recognized another major trap I fell into: trying to continually reconfirm awareness. It's deeply habitual now, and triggers itself when I'm trying to fall asleep, preventing me from getting restful sleep. Really grateful

for this group, because even though it's taking a long time to work through this stuff, I don't know of any other resource that explains it.

5

Tony Taylor
Author
Aditya Prasad Yea I'm 44 so 3 decades for me as well 😀

1

-

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Aditya Prasad Due to lack of insight into the nature of awareness, the mind always has the sense that awareness is behind, an unexamined belief that "awareness is not thought, is not sleep, is not this and that experience" and that "awareness is what is BEHIND them", so it always attempts to jump out of that moment of experience to find this 'familiar background' which is a mind made illusion. It is really just a line, a definition, a mind made map that attempts to locate awareness as 'not that but this', 'not there but here', etc.
When insight into nature of awareness arise, then one is able to overcome the tendency of locating awareness anywhere besides manifestation. Then you will love to just sleep when you sleep, in hearing just sound, in sleeping just sleep, because that's always what's already the case -- never a seer or a seeing besides.
After that 'confirmation' is always auto confirmation by the ten thousand things and auto release (self liberation) upon arising, in fact non arising in its arising. There is absolutely no effort to reconfirm anything necessary what has no who, no where, no when, non local but ever brilliant and spontaneous, without center, division, location or boundaries, all vivid manifestations as spontaneous presence.
Joel Agee, 2013:
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../joel-agee...
Here are two sentences from one of the oldest Dzogchen texts, The All-Creating Monarch (Kunjed Gyalpo) quoted in Longchenpa's Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding (Richard Barron's translation):
"Seek the location of the heart essence through phenomena that derive from it
and come to appreciate it through the skillful means of not conceptualizing in any way whatsoever.
Since the heart essence occurs naturally, dharmakaya is not elsewhere."
Coming across these lines had a vividly awakening effect on me.
Like · · Unfollow Post · September 2, 2012 at 1:29pm
Dannon Flynn, Steven Monaco, Neony Karby and 6 others like this.
Joel Agee Simple but profound and ongoing: a deconstruction of an unconscious habit of locating awareness anywhere else than in the moment-to-moment transient phenomena. Whoosh! No observer, no witness. No location!

David Vardy No location but 'here' in the heart....
September 2, 2012 at 1:46pm via mobile · Like · 2
Chris Collins You're finding a deepening clarity in transcient phenomena ? Can you explain any more ?
September 2, 2012 at 1:48pm via mobile · Like
Joel Agee David: Yes, definitely. And your putting "here" in quotes feels accurate, because that too is unfindable.
September 2, 2012 at 1:50pm · Like · 2
Joel Agee Chris, I'm not sure I can explain exactly. There's a frequent and delightful experience of being "confirmed" by sounds and sights, especially sounds. Greater appreciation of what shows up from moment to moment, a kind of energy of being available for anything. More spontaneous ease in action and speech and thought. But in a way this is all secondary. The recognition of awareness is unobstructed. Sometimes it seems to be obscured by thoughts and feelings, and then it's obvious that those too are the clarity and the emptiness. RIght now there's joy in seeing and saying this.

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
Joel Agee: Appearances are Self-Illuminating
Joel Agee: Appearances are Self-Illuminating

4
Tony Taylor
Author
Soh Wei Yu Soh I have been trying to get under this but using a contemplation based on a conversation you and John had. I contemplate
Is there actually awareness of sound or are there just sounds?
Is there awareness of thinking or is there just one thought , then another , then another etc...
Does that sound like a good contemplation related to awareness ?

3

-

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Tony Taylor
That I would say is related to the two stanzas of anatta.
“Geovani Geo wrote:

We hear a sound. The immediate deeply inbuilt conditioning says, "hearing ". But there is a fallacy there. There is only sound. Ultimately, no hearer and no hearing. The same with all other senses. A centralized, or expanded, or zero-dimensional inherent perceiver or aware-er is an illusion.
Thusness/John Tan:
Very good.
Means both stanza is clear.
In hearing, no hearer.
In hearing, only sound. No hearing."

1
Soh Wei Yu
Admin
As John Tan said before, what we call anatta realization is also realising emptiness of awareness, and many people misunderstand anatta yet continue to reify awareness (that would be more on impersonality and at most nondual but not anatta).
But even after emptiness of awareness it does not mean non existence as you probably have read here https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../no-awareness...

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
No Awareness Does Not Mean Non-Existence of Awareness
No Awareness Does Not Mean Non-Existence of Awareness

3
Tony Taylor
Author
Soh Wei Yu Ok great , thanks. I have read this but the reminder doesn't hurt

1
Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Tony Taylor You might also be interested to read this:
https://www.facebook.com/cyberlogy/posts/10166373379195226?__cft__[0]=AZVqKCx85pGup4QX6E2ldhQeVmU9f3Zzy0OvcJthr0vV_YLIXUcIN70YsMaTuFyJsjclMCP-TW4301F8M4qOc-_bnfq7iOx95I_pFG0_dcyj1HXhryV-zA5wKVrV1kWZTFA&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R

1

Tony Taylor

Author

Soh Wei Yu Yes this is excellent. I'll have to re read it a few times. Thank you

J.P. Hamilton

Soh Wei Yu "a deconstruction of an unconscious habit of locating awareness anywhere else than in the moment-to-moment transient phenomena. Whoosh! No observer, no witness. No location!"

This is very good. Immediate non-dual view. I am starting to see how "locating awareness" creates "awareness as background".

"Far away car sound" is not far away. Right here is "far away car sound". Moving awareness out to "far away car sound" seems to create "container" view.

3

Soh Wei Yu

Admin

J.P. Hamilton

Yes the distanceless and nonreferentiality is one of the things i commented right after anatta

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../my-commentary-on...

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM

My commentary on Bahiya Sutta

My commentary on Bahiya Sutta

2

- **04 Effortlessness.**

Any effort to sustain or achieve a state of Presence is contrary to the self-shining and spontaneous nature of Presence. But this aspect will require further insights (into non-dual, anatta and empty nature - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2007/03/thusnesss-six-stages-of-experience.html) to unfold and mature much further.

Third and fourth point is especially clear after realization of anatta (No-Self, as elucidated in the latter part of this document):

“There is no one who has ever known the essence of awareness. There is no one has ever rested in the presence of awareness. Such is only concept and concept can not cross the threshold of wisdom.

Expanse and eveness are their ownmost and admit no one, no realizer, no Buddha, no being ..... no one can enter therein and yet not only is no one excluded but no thing no time no presence has ever strayed or wavered from .....

Identity does not rest within but resolves..... and the absence of all conceptuality 'about' is known as absence of identity of beings of Buddhas. Devoid of reification, within this eveness, all appearances, all bodies, all thought abides non-other than ownmostness’ uncompounded and uncontrived essence.

What is talked about when we speak of the essence of awareness is not mere intellectualization, abstract philosophizing but is directly realized in the unutterableness of contemplative practice's deep and concept free eveness.

One does not come to abide in this realization. The fact that there is no such one at all is realized long before the eveness of essence is known. One does not come to abide in this state but instead realizes that in fact no-thing has ever strayed from it.

When this is realized then body and mind are informed by, and animate the truth of .....” - Traktung Rinpoche (from *recent talks on ineffability*)

“Hi AEN,

I do not usually reply people about spiritual stuff but I sense the confusion in Mikael's mail to you.

It is advisable to correctly point out to him that there is no short cut to direct path.

In the most direct path, Awareness is already and always at rest. In the most direct path, whatever manifests is Awareness; there is no "in Awareness" and there is no such thing as going deeper in Awareness or resting in Awareness. Anything "going deeper" or "resting" is nothing direct. Nothing more than the illusionary appearances of 'hierarchy' caused by the inherent and dualistic tendency of understanding things.

It is more 'gradual' than 'direct'. Therefore have the right view first before we talk too much about the direct path so that we do not fall into such views. Next clearly understand the cause that blinds us then have direct authentication of our pristine nature so that we will not be misled.

By the way, non-discrimination does not deny us from clear discernment. An enlightenment person is not one that cannot differentiate 'left' from 'right'. :)” - John Tan, 2009

“The 4 aspects are simply guiding and allowing the mind to get prepared for anatta. Look into the four aspects *(Soh: and compare it to Anatta)* and you will understand.” - John Tan, 2019

“Aditya Prasad: I've never understood the distinction between aspects 3 and 4. Shouldn't effortlessness (4) just be the result of dissolving the need to return (3)?

Soh Wei Yu: (3) is about uncontrivance.
(4) is about effortlessness, spontaneous emergence of presence.
One is telling you to stop creating karma. The other is telling you the effortless spontaneity of presence.
But all these are difficult without the correct insights... but still, we have to practice in this way as a means of imitating what life is like in anatta. Means anatta has all the four aspects in maturity, but if you have not reached anatta realization, you consciously and knowingly imitate all those aspects and then with the right pointers and contemplation a breakthrough occurs.

1
· Reply
· 20h

Mr. A.P.: Thank you. Let me see if I understood. 3 is about not needing to return to presence. 4 is noticing that it's there even if you don't.

Soh Wei Yu: Yes but not even a “noticer” remains

In I AM just I AM, in seeing just scenery, both are nondual actualization and not the usual noticing or noting. Not as a subject object knowledge

Although.. Even after anatta “in the seen just the seen...” initially it may be concentrative before it turns into totally effortless spontaneous presence

2009:

(3:05 PM) Thusness: did JK [Soh: see J Krishnamurti and Anatta] said that: When this is a fact not an idea, then dualism and division between observer and observed comes to an end. The observer is the observed - they are not separate states. The observer and the observed are a joint phenomenon and when you experience that directly then you will find that the thing which you have dreaded as emptiness which makes you seek escape into various forms ...?
(3:07 PM) AEN: i think so why?
(3:08 PM) Thusness: quite good...it never really occur to me he has put it so clear, though he is very persistent about no-self. 😳
(3:08 PM) AEN: icic..

(3:09 PM) Thusness: His teaching though talk about no separate agent is still very much concentrative. Not so much of spontaneous perfection.
(3:10 PM) AEN: oic.. UGK leh? more on spontaneous?
(3:10 PM) Thusness: same
(3:10 PM) AEN: icic..
(3:17 PM) Thusness: sometimes you should rejoice how fortunate it is for you to have right understanding of this teaching of anatta at this age.

...

Soh:

In initial anatta, one has the realisation there is no one purest state to abide in or return to, no I to abide in.
Just in the seen just the seen.

Initial anatta should resolve the need to return and abide. (3)

But effortlessness (4) reaches full maturity in later phase of spontaneous presence. Thats how it is for me. Then concentrative mode is not necessary.

The (2) aspect of intensity of luminosity also varies even after anatta.

Because JK is stuck at concentrative mode of anatta instead of maturing it into spontaneous presence, his over exertion in PCE mode caused life long energy imbalances and pain. Kundalini issues.

...

Its interesting that John Tan said sleeplessness [faced by some people like Mr. A. P. and John Tan back in his I AM days] will be solved at stage 5.5. I think 5 to 5.5 is the phase where anatta turns from subtly concentrative to effortless and spontaneous presence. Energy and tension in overfocusing on the details release, all effort releases into selfless spontaneity."

Besides contemplating on the Four Aspects of I AM and the two stanzas of anatta in 2) On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection. and the Two Types of Nondual Contemplation after I AM

It is also good to go through the following links consisting of early days conversation between John Tan and other forummers like Sim Pern Chong. John Tan has said before that these posts are suitable for guiding a person from I AM to non dual and anatta.

Early Forum Posts by Thusness
Part 2 of Early Forum Posts by Thusness
Part 3 of Early Forum Posts by Thusness
Early Conversations Part 4
Early Conversations Part 5
Early Conversations Part 6
Thusness's Conversation Between 2004 to 2012

~ Two Stanzas of Anatta

Stanza One:

There is thinking, no thinker
There is hearing, no hearer
There is seeing, no seer

Stanza Two:

In thinking, just thoughts
In hearing, just sounds
In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.

Read this article for elaboration: **On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection**

~ Two Types of Nondual Inquiry which leads to the collapse of perceiver/perceived duality

1. "Where does awareness end and manifestation begins?" or "Is there a border/dividing line between awareness and manifestation?" (Leads to One Mind);

2. Bahiya Sutta (Leads to Anatta).

   "Then, Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the

cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

Soh's breakthrough to Anatta realization came about through the contemplation of Bahiya Sutta as he described in
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/10/my-commentary-on-bahiya-sutta.html

Also see Ajahn Amaro's article and John's comments below:
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html

Also related and important: The Two Stanzas of Anatta in On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection by John Tan

Someone asked, "How do you do this? I just end up repeating the words over and over again. Or focusing on trying to see clearly what the [two] stanzas [of anatta] are saying and getting a little tense lol. Should I just observe in a relaxed state and try to directly perceive the stanzas? Did you require samadhi for a breakthrough or just persistence?"

Soh replied, "for me there was an element of investigation

seeing if awareness existed as some standalone seer or seeing besides colors and so on, challenging them and investigating until these constructs are seen through and there is direct realisation that awareness is precisely these appearances, sensations, always already so

more an investigation but meditation can help

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2015/12/self-liberation-by-khamtrul-rinpoche-iii.html

"At that point, is the observer—awareness—other than the observed—stillness and movement—or is it actually that stillness and movement itself? By investigating with the gaze of your own awareness, you come to understand that that which is investigating itself is also no other than stillness and movement. Once this happens you will experience lucid emptiness as the naturally luminous self-knowing awareness. Ultimately, whether we say nature and radiance, undesirable and antidote, observer and observed, mindfulness and thoughts, stillness and movement, etc., you should know that the terms of each pair are no different from one another; by receiving

the blessing of the guru, properly ascertain that they are inseparable. Ultimately, to arrive at the expanse free of observer and observed is the realization of the true meaning and the culmination of all analyses. This is called "the view transcending concepts," which is free of conceptualization, or "the vajra mind view.""

Breakthroughs to Anatta

Two persons realised anatta recently in AtR group:

Jayson MPaul shared:

Hello friends. I have been reading the blog for a few years now. It was suggested to me back in 2017 on the DhO, but I wasn't ready for it. Looking back I was definitely in stage 1 and I can trace my way through the first 4 stages. Something dawned on me 2 days ago and all things became unstuck. It became clear to me that every moment is just the thoughts, scenery, sounds. Nothing has ever been obscured! I was trying to find what I was missing but then it dawned that I was missing the fact that "searching for what was missing" is also just thought, sensation, manifestation. I still very subtly believed I was a non-dual awareness having a non-dual experience. I was trying to expand awareness to include more and more sensations. The size isn't the problem, it is realizing that there isn't anything more than just this and digging up subtler and subtler views that support this reification of awareness as a formless thing or ground of all experience. The last couple days have been effortlessly no-mind because all experiences are and always were no-mind. Finally most of the words on your blog speak to my direct experience. Thank you for the pointers! 🙏

Td Unmanifest shared:

Soh Wei Yu suggested I post something about my experience after our email conversation.
I emailed to thank him and John Tan for their writings, resources, and pointers that have helped me immensely in my progress.
Many years ago I had a powerful, "accidental" I Am experience that compelled me to search for what it was and how to make it permanent. Over the years I have explored many teachers, practices, systems, and techniques. Some more helpful than others.
I actually encountered AtR several years ago via a DhO post, but honestly aside from some of the I Am posts and discussions, none of it made much sense to me. I now know that's due to the fact I was stuck in the I Am phase, yet I thought I was much further along in my progress.
Earlier this year, I rediscovered AtR, and began to read and study the Journal and Guide, along with the associated posts. It all was much clearer to me this time -- maybe I was more ripe for the teachings now 🙂
Realizing I had been stuck in I Am, I followed the recommendations from the guide. The contemplation of "where awareness ends and manifestation begins" was especially helpful and propelled me into a nondual realization. It was all

very clear. The luminosity and clarity, descriptions, and experience, all lined up with what was written. It was extremely helpful to have my insights and experiences line up with writings from someone who had been down the path. The insight/shift from no-mind, to anatta was the most powerful, yet ordinary thing. As I said in my email to Soh Wei Yu:
Though the earlier anatta experience shifted to a "no center, no background" emptiness of no-self, there was still a sense of a doer. This current shift/experience has left the doer and the "agencylessness" seems the default view.
Dogen's Uji, and the insights of being-time have also been very powerful for me, along with Tozen's "place where there is no cold or heat," which was recommended by Soh Wei Yu. It's amazing how the suttas and teachers make so much sense now and help clarify and stabilize realization and insight.
Just writing this short post, it's difficult to describe these insights. It makes me appreciate how well the AtR team and other teachers have been able to describe and present the material in a clear way.

...

TD Unmanifest:

I got stuck in I AM for a long time due to clinging to dissociation and the experience as Soh mentioned above. The focus was almost entirely on the mind. When I shifted to other sense doors (hearing in particular) something "popped" and the nondual experience moved from mind to body to everything (not really the best description, but the only way I can think to explain it). Contemplation on where the nondual Self ended and manifestation begins shifted my experience again, and began the process to a taste of no-mind then to annata.

The issue wasn't the dissociation, it was the clinging to the experience that was taken to be something more transcendental than it was. This stuff is hard to explain, so hope that makes some sense 🙂

Labels: Anatta, Jayson MPaul, Td Unmanifest |

Also see the Wind Metaphor and Weather Metaphor in STAGE 5 below.

2011: (1:07 AM) Thusness: when you first experience I AM, what you think is your next phase?
(1:07 AM) AEN: the four phases or aspects of I AM? impersonality, etc
(1:08 AM) Thusness: no i mean you yourself
(1:15 AM) AEN: oh to constantly abide in I AM
(1:15 AM) Thusness: that would be a state of perfection to you isn't it?
(1:15 AM) AEN: yea
(1:16 AM) Thusness: but that would be quite impossible. :P and requires deep concentration and focus however when you realized non-dual, what happened?
(1:23 AM) AEN: it becomes rather effortless and is not a matter of sustaining a samadhi state

(1:24 AM) Thusness: you realized that instead of abiding, non-dual is the key. so your next focus is non-dual, how to make it seamless. then you realized anatta
(1:24 AM) AEN: yea
(1:25 AM) Thusness: and you realized the key to perfection of non-dual. then you are now perfecting the anatta. all is about the same taste throughout. and you refine understanding and view accordingly
(1:30 AM) AEN: ic.. yea

Samadhi (Meditative Absorption)

Ramana Maharshi:

"In samadhi, there is only the feeling 'I am' and no thoughts.

"See to whom the trouble is. It is to the 'I-thought'. Hold it. Then the other thoughts vanish."

"When these thoughts are dispelled, you remain in the state of meditation, free from thoughts."

"The limited and multifarious thoughts having disappeared, there shines in the Heart a kind of wordless illumination of 'I-I', which is pure consciousness."

The I AM or Pure Presence turns oceanic and can be intensely blissful when one has deepened meditative samadhi, a prime modern example being Ramana Maharshi who can sit for days in Nirvikalpa Samadhi or a thoughtless state of Self-Abidance in Pure Presence without leaving his seat, although you do not need to go to such extremes. Even contemporary teachers like Eckhart Tolle spent years sitting in meditative absorption and bliss of Self in a park after initial Self-Realization. However, entering a state of samadhi is not the same as Self-Realization, it can simply be an experience.

Some training in samadhi (a daily meditation practice is important in any phase of one's practice) even after Self-Realization can be a good complementary practice both in this phase and for future phases, but it is even more important to focus on the four aspects of I AM and two nondual contemplations for further advancement.

In many cases, including John Tan, one can spend years cultivating deep samadhi in the I AM phase before cultivating any further insights into non-dual, anatta and emptiness. In Soh's case, due to being familiar with certain pointers and a map, he progressed from I AM to Anatta realization in less than a year even before mastery of samadhi was developed. One can get stuck in I AM for decades or a whole life abiding in Samadhi without any further progress of insights; or one can get speedy insights, but needs to cultivate samadhi further later.

One other possibility is that a practitioner develops both the Wisdom and Samadhi aspect in tandem, such that there is no need for a 'catching up' of the other aspect later on. (Related: Buddha's teachings in Yuganaddha Sutta) In either case,

eventually both Samadhi and Wisdom, Shamatha and Vipassana need to be conjoined and perfected for total liberation and bliss. Maha Total Exertion in the latter phase comes with the aspect of samadhi.

"Total exertion is shamatha and vipassana into one. It is total focus and involvement of the entire body-mind, of everything. However that requires post-anatta insight." - John Tan, 2019

John Tan wrote in August 2010 to me while I had initial nondual breakthroughs after I AM realization,

"Bringing Non-Dual to Foreground
Hi AEN,

Saw your enlistment date in your facebook, good luck to you! 3 weeks is a short period so start working on your physical fitness before the enlistment. There are certain fitness expectations for basic combat training, for guys they must at least able to perform 13 push-ups and 17 sit-ups in a minute and run one mile within 8:30 minutes. You are, of course, expected to do much better than that.

It is also appropriate at this juncture to talk about your recent realization of the 'Eternal Witness'. I am glad that you are clear on the part about experience and realization through direct experiential insight, it is an invaluable insight. After this, you are very much on your own and the 'taste' of a pure, original, primordial, non-conceptual and non-dual luminous state of existence will serve as an internal compass for you. Treasure it!

After the initial realization, there is a strong desire to 'relive' the experience -- this pure sense of existence; in fact the mind wishes the experience be made permanent and it is not uncommon that practitioners perceive the permanent, natural and effortless abiding of this state as 'Nirvana'. Therefore it is a natural progression for you to seek permanent abiding in the Self as a background at this point in time. If you intensify your meditation and abide in the Self, an oceanic blissful experience may arise as a result of deep absorption but it is still a contrived effort, it is not the 'key' towards effortlessness. Nonetheless having a 'taste' of deep Samadhi bliss and understanding the relationship between deep concentration and this oceanic bliss is still crucial.

Having said that, since none of your recent posts are about the absorptive state but are experiences relating to non-dual in transience, it is appropriate to practice bringing this 'taste' of pure luminous brilliance to the foreground. By 'foreground', I am referring to all your six entries and exits (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind) and experience vivid luminous aliveness in colors, forms, shape, sound, scent, taste and thoughts. It is essential for Phase 4 and 5 insights, that is, experiencing directly the 18 dhatus and aggregates and realize that the entire idea of 'I and Mine' is learnt. Also, I do not think you have the time to practice deep absorptive meditation in army. You can re-visit this 'Oceanic Samadhi Bliss' later when there is thoroughness and fearlessness in forgoing the sense of self/Self.
The universe is this arising thought.
The universe is this arising sound.
Just this magnificent arising!

Is Tao.
Homage to all arising.

Doing this foreground practice, **you are effectively refining your realization from "You as pure Existence" to "Existence is the very stuff of whatever arises".** The actual stuff - the screen, the keyboard, the clicking sound, the cool air, the taste, the vibration...is the actuality of Universe itself, there is no other. Nevertheless do take note that these are still experiences, they are not realizations. You will have to go through what you have gone through in the phase of 'I AM' from intermittent experiences to realizations.

I have read some of the articles written by Richard, they are very well written and will be of great help in this 'foreground' practice. There are values in the teachings of Actual Freedom but there is no need to over-claim anything. In my opinion, saying what that is more than necessary does not make one superior.

Also do not get overwhelmed by the vivid luminous brilliance that manifests as the background source or foreground phenomena, let go of all; much like lamas building a sand mandala that is so vivid, colorful and beautiful, is destroyed immediately after it is completed. It is not just about the 'brilliant luminosity', it is also about the 'Gone'; therefore vividly present and instantly gone -- **GATE GATE PARAGATE PARASAMGATE BODHI SVAHA**.

Lastly be sincere to the deeper dispositions, they reveal more about us more than the 'surface' achievements, not to take it lightly. You are a sincere guy so allow your sincerity and your realizations be your inner guides -- they are your only 'true teachers', I am not. :-)
Labels: Anatta, John Tan, Non Dual, Non-dual | "

Also, as explained earlier, the I AM realization is not a maintenance state. Furthermore it is also not something that one can only "experience" during a state of meditative trance at a faraway mountain shielded from daily life. Someone who realized I AM will come to understand, as John Tan puts it in 2007, "AMness has limitless potential and must be expressed in a relative world in constant interaction." As the source and ground of everything, AMness is seen to have infinite potentiality to express in, through and as everything. I have seen many who have realized I AM yet remain pretty grounded in their everyday life, they treat daily life as practice and as a way to express their realization of I AMness even though they have not had deeper realisations into non-duality, anatta or emptiness. As John Tan said in 2007, grounding one's insights into daily living is not indicative or equivalent to the depth of insights, yet in each phase of insight one's realisations should be actualized and grounded in our daily living as a practice.

On the other hand, people, particularly the Neo-Advaitins, advocate no further need for meditation and practices after (or even before) some initial I AM or nondual breakthrough. Don't listen to these naive statements.

"Don't listen to people saying (that there's) no need for meditation. These are people with only small attainment and realisation." - John Tan, 2007

“Sometimes people will think that they understand these Teachings and think that because they think they understand them, they don't need to sit zazen and to actually practise and embody the teachings. But as Eihei Dogen zenji says in the Fukanzazengi, "Just suppose you become puffed up about your understanding and inflate your little experiences: You think you have seen the truth, attained the Way, recognized the luminosity of mind and can grasp at heaven. You might think that these initial jaunts about the borders are entering the realm of enlightenment but you've lost the Way of complete liberation." It's like just getting the tip of your toe wet - not even the whole toe - because you think it's safer to keep your distance from it. If you really understood the first thing about these Teachings, there is no way that you could justify not sitting zazen.” - Ven. Jinmyo Renge osho https://wwzc.org/dharma-text/transparent

“Although Buddha was endowed with natural knowledge, he sat in zazen for six years. Bodhidharma bequeathed us the legacy of the Buddha- mind, yet still sat facing a wall for nine years. Such were the ancient sages. Why can we not practice like them? Therefore, desist from pur- suing words and letters intellectually and reflect upon your self inwardly. Thus your body and mind shall be cast off naturally and your original nature (honrai no memmoku) shall be realized. If you wish to attain it, be diligent in zazen at once.” - Zen Master Dogen

“Once, when Jōshū was addressing his assembly, he said: For thirty years, I lived in the south intent on nothing but doing seated meditation. If any of you wish to realize the One Great Matter,*you will encounter It by pursuing the principle of doing seated meditation. If after three years, or five years, or twenty years, or even thirty years, you can still say that you have not realized the Truth, take the skull of this old monk and make it into a pot to piss in. That is the kind of vow he took. Truly, doing the practice of seated meditation is the straight road of the Buddha’s Way. We should follow the principle of “Just sit and you shall see what happens.” Later, people would say of him, “Jōshū was truly an Old Buddha.”” - Zen Master Dogen

“As my Master also said, all the Buddhas, as well as all the Ancestors, have kept to the Buddha Dharma as Their dwelling place. One and All have not only sat upright in Their meditative state of delight in the Truth, but They have also put the Precepts into practice, and thus They have taken this combination as the precise and certain way for awakening to the Truth. Those in India and China who have experienced an awakening have likewise conformed to this approach. This is based on Master directly passing on to disciple, in private, this wondrous method, and the latter preserving its genuine inner meaning.

When we speak of the correct Transmission in our tradition, the straightforward Buddha Teaching of direct Transmission is ‘the best of the best’. From the very moment when a disciple comes to meet face-to-face with the one who is to be his spiritual friend and knowing teacher, there is no need to have the disciple offer incense, make prostrations, chant the names of the Buddhas, do ascetic practices and penances, or recite Scriptures: the Master just has the disciple do pure meditation until he lets his body and mind drop off. Even though it may be merely for a moment, when someone, whilst sitting upright in meditation, puts the mark of the Buddha seal upon his three types of volitional actions—namely, those of body, speech and thought—the whole physical universe and everything in it becomes and is the Buddha seal; all of space, throughout, becomes and is enlightenment.” - Zen Master Dogen

""Now, if anyone would develop these four establishings of mindfulness in this way for seven years, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here & now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return.
"Let alone seven years. If anyone would develop these four establishings of mindfulness in this way for six years... five... four... three... two years... one year... seven months... six months... five... four... three... two months... one month... half a month, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here & now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return.
"Let alone half a month. If anyone would develop these four establishings of mindfulness in this way for seven days, one of two fruits can be expected for him: either gnosis right here & now, or—if there be any remnant of clinging-sustenance—non-return.
"'This is the direct path for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow & lamentation, for the disappearance of pain & distress, for the attainment of the right method, & for the realization of unbinding—in other words, the four establishings of mindfulness.' Thus was it said, and in reference to this was it said."
That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted in the Blessed One's words." - Buddha, Mahasatipatthana Sutta

"(11:54 PM) Thusness:Until some time, after meditation in a certain posture. One must experience the luminosity with the condition of opening eyes, walking, every movement, but only for one that is ready. Many zen practitioners thought that they already there, but they are not. Unless one has experienced non-dual and go to the finer aspects until quite a certain level, then it is appropriate. Many only reside at stage 1 and 2, and start talking about meditation not being needed. This is not correct. I would say only until *(one reaches)* 5.5 in terms of direct path then one is fit to say that, then practice is everywhere." - John Tan, 2007

John also shared before, "So meditation is everywhere and in every activity. That said, still sit and don't act smart. And exercise."

Kyle Dixon shared on reddit something that John Tan and I liked:

Jean-Luc Achard on Integration of the View and the Role of Diligence in Relation to the Key Points of Trekcho

It is actually pretty easy to enter the experience of rigpa but more difficult to cultivate it without artifice, outside of a retreat context. Most of the westerners I know do not do any retreat. They go to teachings when a lama is there and they call it a retreat. I've received a lot of teachings in Tibet and none of the masters ever said a word about integration into daily working life. This is something that a few Tibetan masters have made for the west. Traditionally, when you receive a Dzogchen teaching, you then go into retreat and generate some experience. This takes months at best. Then you come back to the master and relate your experience. Then you get further details on more advanced practice, etc., and you go into another retreat. So not doing any "real" retreat is probably a drawback that affects most people. For instance, the retreat of trekchö in the Kunzang Nyinthik (its the same for those who follow the Yeshe Lama for instance) does not last less than 18 continuous months in a traditional context.

Another point that is related is misunderstanding some key points in trekchö. For instance, all our masters repeat that once you have entered the state of trekchö, then you must not do anything. And you consequently have people not doing anything for years! They just remain like that, glued in a state of total blankness, using vague words like

"presence" to describe the actual fogginess of their experience. Actually, what texts say is that you don't do anything at first, not continually. "At first" means that it's simply the threshold of trekchö practice. What you actually have to do is once you don't doubt anymore regarding the actual "flavor" of this state, then you have to cultivate it with artifice during specific sessions (that's the purpose of the 18 months mentioned above) after which you are quasi-certain to reach a non-regressive stability in this state. Most of the time, this stability is reached quite earlier during the retreat. It's actually easier to succeed in this during a retreat than during the daily working life when you have all the distractions of your ordinary social life. So during the retreat, at a certain stage, you train in integration. There are four things to integrate: (i) the activities of the three doors, (ii) the activities of the six associations of consciousness, (iii) specific intellectual activities of the mind, and (iv) the variety of circumstances that life puts on your path. So the "doing nothing" is really something for beginners in trekchö. Most people I know mistake it for the real practice. That's the worst mistake to make because one is never going to make any progress if one goes on like this.

There are plenty of things to do. Rushen for instance in order to clearly deepen this knowledge and have a direct experience that is not produced by our discursiveness. Then, the training of the 3 doors. Then specific techniques such as the four natural accesses to properly access the state of trekchö. [One should not think] there is nothing to do: there are things to do to enter this state, and once you're in it you cultivate it by integrating other things (after having become familiarized with it). This appears to be not understood by all. When you are in this state, you just have to stabilize it. This takes the whole path to do so! Don't bypass it because you don't like it, it's precisely like this, one has to practice, period. You may state otherwise but this is not Dzogchen anymore. Once you are stable in the experience of the natural state, you realize that this experience is uncompounded, unaltered, etc., and you don't have to do anything to correct it. But in general, everyone (including our masters at a stage in their life) regresses from it. So one has to become familiar with it, through contemplation practice. But this contemplation practice is aimless if it just means sitting and doing nothing. That means each time you quit your sitting meditation, you are regressing from that state.

But, if you want to integrate the natural state in a non-regressive way, you have to do something. Trekchö has to be done for very long sessions during specific retreats in total silence and isolation. The longer the sessions, the deeper the experience grows until, like a sheet which constantly put into water never dries, one does not regress anymore from the experience of the natural state.

— Jean-Luc Achard"

How silent meditation helped me with nondual inquiry

by Greg Goode in https://www.facebook.com/groups/TheDirectPathGroup

(The Direct Path Group is for discussions related to Greg Goode and Sri Atmananda's teachings related to Advaita Vedanta)

= How silent meditation helped me with nondual inquiry =
This is about how silent meditation helped me with nondual inquiry. Silent meditation is different from inquiry, and helps prepare one for doing inquiry. It helps in several ways, which I'll say more about below.
There are various forms of silent meditation and various paths of inquiry. For example, Shamatha is recommended if one wants to realize emptiness via analytic meditation.

Personally, I found Zazen helpful for nondual inquiry. How can it help? It stabilizes the mind so that the mind doesn't get off track or fall asleep during the inquiry.
Here is a very rough and schematic quasi-Vedantic account of how this works. It's not a DP account, but something that we were taught in the Chinmaya Mission. Vedanta looks at the body/mind apparatus as composed of various layers or sheaths of active energy. At the grossest is the body. At a more subtle layer is the "emotional body," then the mind as controller of its activities. And more subtle still is the intellect, the process of ratiocination, making connections and insight.
All activities engage all of the levels, but some activities have their center of gravity more on one level than another. According to the present scheme, Nondual inquiry begins largely at the energetic level of the intellect. But the insights permeate all levels. And nondual insights deconstruct the levels altogether.
In order that the intellect do its appointed job well, it needs to be somewhat calm. It cannot be jumpy or inclined to nod off into sleep.
For the intellect to be calm, the less subtle levels need to be somewhat calm as well. This is familiar - if there is emotional turbulence, it is hard to think.
There are activities that address each of the levels. Such as karma yoga or recreational dancing or athletics for the physical level. Bhakti yoga or art or singing or performing music for the emotional level. Raja yoga or study or concentrated meditation for the level of controlling the mind. And jnana yoga or mathematics or other kinds of coursing stuff out for the intellectual level.
The calmer the levels that are less subtle than the intellect, the calmer the intellect will be able to be.
This is where zazen helped me. It came in at the level of the control-of-the-mind level and smoothed things out wonderfully. Plus it gives a taste of silence. For me, it helped the mind stay with the subtleties of jnana yoga without a a rage of chattering thoughts, and without getting drowsy and falling asleep.
Zazen is taught at Zen centers. Phenomenally (not doctrinally) it is a process of keeping the mind extremely steady on a subtle object like counting or the breath. There are two things that could depart from that: a chatty mind or a sleepy one. Whenever you notice that either has happened, you simply go back to counting or following the breath.
Besides calmness and stability and subtlety, I noticed physically healthy things, like better digestion, more energy on the lower body and more closely focused in everything where needed.
One can do zazen earlier in the day, and then nondual inquiry later in the day. And nondual inquiry will be supercharged. Of course there are other preparatory activities that will help. This was just my experiences with zazen!

...

Hi Andrej, Here are some examples of which inquiries were helped by Zazen.... I did years of inquiries, mostly before I did Zazen. The main inquiry I did with the aid of Zazen was later and extremely subtle: I was looking into why Truth and Reality were widely held to be nondual whereas I experienced a very slight, benevolent duality between witnessing awareness and the arisings that seemed to arise from/to it. There was no suffering (I was at the so-called "transparent witness" gestalt). But even so, I was drawn to this issue for over a year. I happened to be doing Zazen at the time - I only realized later that it helped, and how it helped. How did Zazen help? I was already pretty good at focusing and keeping my attention on an object. My father had this too. He brought it his work home and did it at the large dinner table while the TV was on a few feet away and we kids were running around. It didn't bug him a bit! He taught this focus to us. We were a family of introverted artists, so it was easy. All my school, military and corporate experience helped with focus as well. But this topic (subject/object distinction) was very slippery. In a word, Zazen helped make the mind more open and subtle. It quieted the mind so that it was more open to subtle insight coming from unexpected angles, as opposed to the usual ones. And it helped the mind recognize patterns and formulations of a vaguer and more subtle

type. Here's a physicalist-type example. Imagine putting a long hair in a phone book and then cover it with one page. Then shut your eyes and try to trace the hair with your fingertips

...

Kyle Dixon:

Sitting has been invaluable for me in my life, with positive, long lasting effects. I really cannot recommend it enough. Also the more I sat, and the more stable my meditation became, the brighter my mind became, like increasing the brightness on a lamp. Energetically things became very coordinated, like Greg mentioned, and what I would call instances of transcendent insight would erupt spontaneously. Which were like precursors to larger events of the same species. Meditation if done right is just a fantastic supplement to any spiritual endeavor. It breathes life into the process and makes everything easier and more enjoyable.

...

Mr. A said: “That’s another thing, what would you need to practice for? your true nature is lacking nothing, so why supplement it with these meaningless practices? “

Soh replied:

Your question is a good one, and since this is precisely the paramount question which drove Zen Master Dogen's search to China and which culminated his great awakening, I'll paste this famous text as a response to your question as it seems appropriate:

Zen Master Dogen’s teachings on Zazen:

“Fukan Zazengi (Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen)

The way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent on practice and realization? The true vehicle is self-sufficient. What need is there for special effort? Indeed, the whole body is free from dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from this very place; what is the use of traveling around to practice? And yet, if there is a hairsbreadth deviation, it is like the gap between heaven and earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion. Suppose you are confident in your understanding and rich in enlightenment, gaining the wisdom that knows at a glance, attaining the Way and clarifying the mind, arousing an aspiration to reach for the heavens. You are playing in the entranceway, but you are still short of the vital path of emancipation.

Consider the Buddha: although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of upright sitting can yet be seen. As for Bodhidharma, although he had received the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still. If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice?

Therefore, put aside the intellectual practice of investigating words and chasing phrases, and learn to take the backward step that turns the light and shines it inward. Body and mind of themselves will drop away, and your original face will manifest. If you want to realize such, get to work on such right now.

For practicing Zen, a quiet room is suitable. Eat and drink moderately. Put aside all involvements and suspend all affairs. Do not think "good" or "bad." Do not judge true or false. Give up the operations of mind, intellect, and consciousness; stop measuring with thoughts, ideas, and views. Have no designs on becoming a buddha. How could that be limited to sitting or lying down?

At your sitting place, spread out a thick mat and put a cushion on it. Sit either in the full-lotus or half-lotus position. In the full-lotus position, first place your right foot on your left thigh, then your left foot on your right thigh. In the half-lotus, simply place your left foot on your right thigh. Tie your robes loosely and arrange them neatly. Then place your right hand on your left leg and your left hand on your right palm, thumb-tips lightly touching. Straighten your body and sit upright, leaning neither left nor right, neither forward nor backward. Align your ears with your shoulders and your nose with your navel. Rest the tip of your tongue against the front of the roof of your mouth, with teeth together and lips shut. Always keep your eyes open, and breathe softly through your nose.

Once you have adjusted your posture, take a breath and exhale fully, rock your body right and left, and settle into steady, immovable sitting. Think of not thinking, "Not thinking --what kind of thinking is that?" Nonthinking. This is the essential art of zazen.

The zazen I speak of is not meditation practice. It is simply the dharma gate of joyful ease, the practice realization of totally culminated enlightenment. It is *the koan* realized; traps and snares can never reach it. If you grasp the point, you are like a dragon gaining the water, like a tiger taking to the mountains. For you must know that the true dharma appears of itself, so that from the start dullness and distraction are struck aside.

When you arise from sitting, move slowly and quietly, calmly and deliberately. Do not rise suddenly or abruptly. In surveying the past, we find that transcendence of both mundane and sacred, and dying while either sitting or standing, have all depended entirely on the power of zazen.

In addition, triggering awakening with a finger, a banner, a needle, or a mallet, and effecting realization with a whisk, a fist, a staff, or a shout --these cannot be understood by discriminative thinking; much less can they be known through the practice of supernatural power. They must represent conduct beyond seeing and hearing. Are they not a standard prior to knowledge and views?

This being the case, intelligence or lack of it is not an issue; make no distinction between the dull and the sharp-witted. If you concentrate your effort single-mindedly, that in itself is wholeheartedly engaging the way.

Practice-realization is naturally undefiled. Going forward is, after all, an everyday affair.

In general, in our world and others, in both India and China, all equally hold the buddha-seal. While each lineage expresses its own style, they are all simply devoted to sitting, totally blocked in resolute stability. Although they say that there are ten thousand distinctions and a thousand variations, they just wholeheartedly engage the way in zazen. Why leave behind the seat in your own home to wander in vain through the dusty realms of other lands? If you make one misstep, you stumble past what is directly in front of you.

You have gained the pivotal opportunity of human form. Do not pass your days and nights in vain. You are taking care of the essential activity of the buddha-way. Who would take wasteful delight in the spark from a flintstone? Besides, form and substance are like the dew on the grass, the fortunes of life like a dart of lightning --emptied in an instant, vanished in a flash.

Please, honored followers of Zen, long accustomed to groping for the elephant, do not doubt the true dragon. Devote your energies to the way of direct pointing at the real. Revere the one who has gone beyond learning and is free from effort. Accord with the enlightenment of all the buddhas; succeed to the samadhi of all the ancestors. Continue to live in such a way, and you will be such a person. The treasure store will open of itself, and you may enjoy it freely." – Zen Master Dogen

...

On sitting posture:

"Soh Wei Yu 1) Do not worry whether you are doing correctly, as long as you keep the Great Doubt going and do not get stuck on experiences. Silence or noise, stillness or thoughts, continue inquiring into the Source.

2) Preferable posture is full lotus which is what I do, if not half lotus is alright, if not burmese or sitting on a chair. It takes mindfulness and training to get your posture right. Formally meditating is a good and recommended practice.

-

  Owen Richards Soh Wei Yu why would lotus be necessary?

Michael Zaurov Soh Wei Yu dammmn full lotus? Very nice 👍 can you feel energetic shift with it compared to say half lotus ?

Soh Wei Yu Michael Zaurov straighter body and mind body feels more conducive to stilling body and mind.

But don't worry if you can't sit full lotus..

Before this covid thing I frequently sit outside in parks on chairs. Nowadays parks chairs are forbidden for use

1

Soh Wei Yu Owen Richards I agree with this explanation by Thrangu Rinpoche:

1. The Correct Sitting Posture

Generally, one might think that one meditates with one's mind and it doesn't really matter what position the body is in, that one will still be able to meditate without taking the physical posture into account. But there is a very central factor of meditation involved with the physical posture in making the mind stable. It is said that if one is sitting with the body straight, the channels within the body will also be straight. What is the benefit if the channels in the body are straight because the body is straight? It means that the air flowing through the channels will then flow straight. Then there will be no blockages and nothing preventing the flow of the airs within the channels. What is the benefit if the airs flow straight through the channels? It means that the mind will be in accord if the channels are straight and the airs flow straight. This means that if the mind itself is wavering and unsteady, it is usually based on the wavering movements of the airs flowing through the channels. The nature of the air is related to the mind, so the movement of the mind depends on the movement of the airs. Therefore, if the airs are flowing in a straight way through the channels, then the mind itself will become still and stable; it will not be agitated or unstable. This is the reason why the correct posture in sitting is important for meditation. There is what is called "the seven aspects of Vairocana" for the physical posture in meditation, which doesn't refer to Buddha Vairocana but to the seven aspects of the physical posture that will bring clarity to one's meditation.

Two faults can occur during meditation. The first is mental dullness, in which case the mind is not clear. So, first there is a lack of clarity, then a dullness of mind, then stupor, and finally sleep. When these occur, one doesn't have the necessary clarity for the meditation; there is a lack of clarity in the meditation. That is one defect one has to be free of. Another defect is agitation of the mind, in which case one may think about things one likes. Feeling happy and glad, one becomes involved with those thoughts and then the mind becomes more and more unstable. Sometimes agitation may arise because one regrets something, in which case one ponders things one has done, e.g., thinking, "Oh, that was bad. I shouldn't have done that." One feels more and more regret, which creates instability in one's meditation. Or agitation may arise due to thoughts of doubt, e.g., thinking, "Oh, it should be like this or like that." One feels more and more doubt, which creates instability of meditation. That is the second fault of meditation, which has to be overcome.

One can eliminate the two faults arising in meditation by taking in the seven aspects of sitting that bring clarity to meditation. If one is sitting in the correct posture, sometimes one can have dullness or agitation, but one can eliminate these faults more easily by sitting in the correct posture.

http://www.dharmadownload.net/.../Teaching_English_0060.htm

Calm Abiding Meditation

Soh Wei Yu

Sakyamuni said to the vast assembly, "This is why we sit in the full lotus posture." Then the Thus Come, the Generous One, teaches his disciples to sit like this. Sometimes those outside of the Way seek for truth by standing on the tips of their toes, sometimes they seek the truth by ceaseless standing, sometimes they seek the truth by wrapping their legs around their shoulders. Through silliness like this their minds sink into a sea of delusions and the body is never left in peace. For this reason, the Buddha teaches his students to sit in the full lotus posture with upright minds. Why? If the body is upright, it is easy for the mind to be upright. When the body sits up straight, the mind is not weary, the mind is evened, intention is aligned and attention is woven with what is just present. If the mind is agitated or distracted or if the body wavers or leans they are restored and balanced. If you want to experience samadhi or enter samadhi, or even if the mind is just distracted and following various images, all such states can be completely balanced. Practising in this way, we experience and enter the samadhi that is sovereign of all samadhis.

- Buddha, quoted by Dogen Zenji in Zanmai-O-Zanmai"

"(9:57 PM) Thusness: like X he is in the midst of retreating due to some reasons and he is clearly not accumulating anything extra. she should retire when the time is right and practice hard. It is not easy to go through engagement and yet want to realise self-liberation this way. It is all thoughts. this is not self-liberation. So before the true realisation of self-liberation, it is best to lessen these activities though we still can be a lay... but lessen these [worldly] activities until correct realisation is attained and continue to refine the experience, then dirty yourself in the mud later.

(10:01 PM) AEN: as in?

(10:02 PM) Thusness: means self-liberation aspect is seen, one can dirty himself. :) But not kept dirtying oneself unknowingly. If she understood by six paramitas in daily life, then that is better and more applicable. Like ren ru (patience). Just practice hard. :)" - John Tan, 2007

"Relaxing means remaining still, coordinated breathing, holding a fixed gaze, etc., that is the actual meaning of "non-doing." Essentially staying still for prolonged periods of time, like in thögal.

Yet at the same time, that lack of doing takes a great deal of effort, it isn't easy to sit still for that long.

The same goes for resting in a moment of unfabricated consciousness, that clarity takes no effort, but remaining undistracted and self-liberating thought takes a great deal of effort.

One could say it is a paradox but it isn't really, the "doing" and "non-doing" are different facets of the same undertaking. It is just that sometimes the non-doing is emphasized to contrast causal vehicle practices. Dzogchen isn't all non-doing though, there is much to do." - Kyle Dixon, 2021, https://www.reddit.com/r/Dzogchen/comments/o7bodi/you_must_decide_with_complete_certainty_that/h310nq7/

"Yes, but the true method that develops the view is undistracted self-liberation. It is not so easy, as Sogyal Rinpoche discusses here:

It is extremely hard to rest undistracted in the nature of mind, even for a moment, let alone to self-liberate a single thought or emotion as it rises. We often assume that simply because we understand something intellectually, or think we do, we have actually realized it. This is a great delusion. It requires the maturity that only years of listening, contemplation, reflection, meditation, and sustained practice can ripen." - Kyle Dixon, 2021, https://www.reddit.com/r/Dzogchen/comments/o7bodi/you_must_decide_with_complete_certainty_that/h310nq7/

“level 2
krodha
· 1d · edited 1d

And to me the logical answer to how one can sustain 24/7 meditation and bliss is by doing the effortless practices. Since it was posted in r/dzogchen I gave a dzogchen explanation.

To which I replied with the Dzogchen explanation that you cannot jump into effortlessness without initially cultivating the view with effort, and you proceeded to reject that and claimed I am explaining things from the standpoint of causal methods, which I am not, this is mennagde.

But that’s honestly where it started and I feel we’re kind of saying the same thing—I agree in the beginning effort based practices are used after recognition.

I’m not sure that we are saying the same thing. You think practice is effortless, yet for how long can you sustain the view before distraction arises? Not long unless you are in retreat, and so sustaining the view requires effort and diligence, and then later when some stability is achieved, it becomes more and more effortless. Eventually, awakened equipoise dawns, and then it is actually effortless. There is a gradient of degrees in practice and how it develops, and you seem to want to throw that all out the window and pretend your practice is effortless when it absolutely isn’t. No one’s practice is effortless who does have a high degree of stability. There are aspects of practice that are effortless, but someone who claims their practice in toto is effortless is deluded.

But using effort based practice to try and sustain 24/7 meditation and bliss, as OP was saying, seems harmful.

It isn’t harmful. Your practice will not develop otherwise. 24/7 isn’t necessary, but set sessions where the view is cultivated are necessary, and the longer the better.

We are discussing actual practice here. Actual Dzogchen practice. Not catch phrases about effortlessness we cherry pick from expositions. Trekchö develops through applied effort and it will never, ever, develop without skillfully applied effort.”

“*I’ve posted a bunch of teachings talking about this effortless dzogchen practice*

Yes, but you have no understanding as to how effort is applied within that so-called “effortless” context. The approach is multi-faceted, aspects which require effort coupled with aspects that are effortless, it is not black and white like you are suggesting, all effortless. If it were truly effortless there would be no need for 18 month trekchö retreats, and it wouldn’t take teachers like Kunzang Dechen Lingpa 7 years in strict retreat to accomplish the third vision. If it were effortless, these accomplishments would arise spontaneously by themselves, but they don’t. They arise for those who employ the view effectively and who understand how diligence and effort are dovetailed with these so-called effortless aspects of the view.

The problem is that if you go around just saying it’s all effortless, you end up closing the door on many people who will follow that advice, form an aversion to effort, and their precious human life will not reach its full potential, worst case it will be wasted altogether.

You will fall into distraction and this state of being distracted can be left as it is, unaltered

No my friend, the minute you detect that you have fallen into discursiveness the view has to be reeled in immediately and that all has to be cut off so that one goes back to exercising self-liberation. Discursiveness is never left as it is, it is a total corruption of one’s practice.

Maybe you do some other practice and that’s fine.

I practice the actual view, which involves the attributes I have already covered in previous posts, that is the method as described in the 17 tantras.

If you are distracted and allowing distraction to be left unaltered, then you aren’t even practicing sūtrayāna, much less dzogpachenpo. Distraction is impossible if you are accurately cultivating the view, because every arising is directly hit.

I’ve acknowledged effort based practices are used in the beginning.

I’m not talking about effort based practices. I am discussing the role of effort in the very same discipline you claim is devoid of effort.” – - Kyle Dixon, 2021, https://www.reddit.com/r/Dzogchen/comments/o7bodi/you_must_decide_with_complete_certainty_that/h310nq7/

“Many people have a very warped understanding of the so called "highest teachings" such as Dzogchen and Mahamudra, thinking that these teachings allow us to bypass or skip meditation training, or that it does not require "practice" and "meditation". This cannot be further from the truth.

Here are the words from Lopon Malcolm, a qualified dharma teacher who was asked by his Dzogchen master, Kunzang Dechen Lingpa to teach Dzogchen -

Malcolm (Loppon Namdrol) wrote:

Rongzom makes the point very clearly that Dzogchen practitioners must develop the mental factors that characterize the first dhyana, vitarka, vicara, pritvi, sukha and ekagraha, i.e. applied attention, sustained attention, physical ease, mental ease and one-pointedness. If you do not have a stable samatha practice, you can't really call yourself a Dzogchen practitioner at all. At best, you can call yourself someone who would like to be a Dzogchen practitioner a ma rdzogs chen pa. People who think that Dzogchen frees one from the need to meditate seriously are seriously deluded. The sgra thal 'gyur clearly says:

The faults of not meditating are:
the characteristics of samsara appear to one,
there is self and other, object and consciousness,
the view is verbal,
the field is perceptual,
one is bound by afflictions,
also one throws away the path of the buddhahood,
one does not understand the nature of the result,
a basis for the sameness of all phenomena does not exist,
one's vidya is bound by the three realms,
and one will fall into conceptuality

He also added:

Dhyanas are defined by the presence or absence of specific mental factors.

The Dhyanas were not the vehicle of Buddha's awakening, rather he coursed through them in order to remove traces of rebirth associated with the form and formless realms associated with the dhyanas.

...

Whether you are following Dzogchen or Mahamudra, and regardless of your intellectual understanding, your meditation should have, at base, the following characteristics:

Prthvi -- physical ease Sukha -- mental joy Ekagraha -- one-pointedness Vitarka -- initial engagement Vicara -- sustained engagement

If any of these is missing, you have not even achieved perfect samatha regardless of whether or not you are using an external object, the breath or even the nature of the mind.

...

Even in Dzogchen, the five mental factors I mentioned are key without which you are really not going to make any progress.

...

Samadhi/dhyāna is a natural mental factor, we all have it. The problem is that we naturally allow this mental factor to rest on afflictive objects such as HBO, books, video games, etc.

Śamatha practice is the discipline of harnessing our natural predisposition for concentration, and shifting it from afflictive conditioned phenomena to nonafflictive conditioned phenomena, i.e., the phenomena of the path. We do this in order to create a well tilled field for the growth of vipaśyāna. Śamatha ultimately allows us to have mental stability and suppresses afflictive mental factors so that we may eventually give rise to authentic insight into the nature of reality. While it is possible to have vipaśyāna without cultivating śamatha, it is typically quite unstable and lacks the power to effectively eradicate afflictive patterning from our minds. Therefore, the basis of all practice in Buddhadharma, from Abhidharma to the Great Perfection, is the cultivation of śamatha as a preliminary practice for germination of vipaśyāna."
- https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/09/dzogchen-meditation-and-jhana.html

"Having simply identified vidyā [rig pa], some people, who lack even a trace of any meditation, claim they have experienced the extinction into dharmatā and there is nothing more to spiritual awakening than this. That is an enormous mistake! The qualities of realization mature through the power of gradual practice. This is how you must reach the state of liberation."
- Dudjom Lingpa

"To reject practice by saying, 'it is conceptual!' is the path of fools. A tendency of the inexperienced and something to be avoided."

— Longchenpa

"People that have gone into the nihilistic understanding of 'non-doing' ended up in a mess. You see that those having right understanding of 'non-doing' are free, yet you see discipline, focus and peace in them. Like just sitting and walking... ...in whatever they endeavor. Fully anatta." - John Tan, 2018

"*What is the greatest obstacle to experiencing this reality?*
Identification with your mind, which causes thought to become compulsive. Not to be able to stop thinking is a dreadful affliction, but we don't realize this because almost everybody is suffering from it, so it is considered normal. This incessant mental noise prevents you from finding that realm of inner stillness that is inseparable from Being. It also creates a false mind-made self that casts a shadow of fear and suffering. We will look at all that in more detail later." - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

“Isn't thinking essential in order to survive in this world?
Your mind is an instrument, a tool. It is there to be used for a specific task, and when the task is completed, you lay it down. As it is, I would say about 80 to 90 percent of most people's thinking is not only repetitive and useless, but because of its dysfunctional and often negative nature, much of it is also harmful. Observe your mind and you will find this to be true. It causes a serious leakage of vital energy.
This kind of compulsive thinking is actually an addiction. What characterizes an addiction? Quite simply this: you no longer feel that you have the choice to stop. It seems stronger than you. It also gives you a false sense of pleasure, pleasure that invariably turns into pain.” - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

“So when you listen to a thought, you are aware not only of the thought but also of yourself as the witness of the thought. A new dimension of consciousness has come in. As you listen to the thought, you feel a conscious presence - your deeper self - behind or underneath the thought, as it were. The thought then loses its power over you and quickly subsides, because you are no longer energizing the mind through identification with it. This is the beginning of the end of involuntary and compulsive thinking. When a thought subsides, you experience a discontinuity in the mental stream - a gap of "no-mind." At first, the gaps will be short, a few seconds perhaps, but gradually they will become longer. When these gaps occur, you feel a certain stillness and peace inside you. This is the beginning of your natural state of felt oneness with Being, which is usually obscured by the mind. With practice, the sense of stillness and peace will deepen. In fact, there is no end to its depth. You will also feel a subtle emanation of joy arising from deep within: the joy of Being.

It is not a trancelike state. Not at all. There is no loss of consciousness here. The opposite is the case. If the price of peace were a lowering of your consciousness, and the price of stillness a lack of vitality and alertness, then they would not be worth having. In this state of inner connectedness, you are much more alert, more awake than in the mind-identified state. You are fully present. It also raises the vibrational frequency of the energy field that gives life to the physical body.

As you go more deeply into this realm of no-mind, as it is sometimes called in the East, you realize the state of pure consciousness. In that state, you feel your own presence with such intensity and such joy that all thinking, all emotions, your physical body, as well as the whole external world become relatively insignificant in comparison to it. And yet this is not a selfish but a selfless state. It takes you beyond what you previously thought of as "your self." That presence is essentially you and at the same time inconceivably greater than you. What I am trying to convey here may sound paradoxical or even contradictory, but there is no other way that I can express it.” - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

(It should be noted that what Eckhart Tolle calls ‘No-Mind’ here is more akin to a state of no conceptual thinking + I AM Presence, which is different from how the Awakening to Reality blog uses the term ‘No-Mind’ as referring to an experience free from any sense of subjectivity of self/Self, which we will discuss later on)

“I knew, of course, that something profoundly significant had happened to me, but I didn’t understand it at all. It wasn’t until several years later, after I had read spiritual texts and spent time with spiritual teachers, that I realized that what everybody was looking for had already happened to me. I understood that the intense pressure of suffering that night must have forced my consciousness to withdraw from its identification with the unhappy and deeply fearful self, which

is ultimately a fiction of the mind. This withdrawal must have been so complete that this false, suffering self immediately collapsed, just as if a plug had been pulled out of an inflatable toy. What was left then was my true nature as the ever-present I am: consciousness in its pure state prior to identification with form. Later I also learned to go into that inner timeless and deathless realm that I had originally perceived as a void and remain fully conscious. I dwelt in states of such indescribable bliss and sacredness that even the original experience I just described pales in comparison. A time came when, for a while, I was left with nothing on the physical plane. I had no relationships, no job, no home, no socially defined identity. I spent almost two years sitting on park benches in a state of the most intense joy." - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

On Ramana Maharshi:

"According to Narasimha, in July 1896,[22][note 5] at age 16, a sudden fear of death befell him. He was struck by "a flash of excitement" or "heat", like some *avesam*, a "current" or "force" that seemed to possess him,[web 1] while his body became rigid. He initiated a process of self-enquiry asking himself what it is that dies. He concluded that the body dies, but that this "current" or "force" remains alive, and recognised this "current" or "force" as his *Self*, which he later identified with "the personal God, or Iswara".[web 1][note 2]

In one of his rare written comments on this process Ramana Maharshi wrote, "Enquiring within *Who is the seer?* I saw the seer disappear leaving That alone which stands forever. No thought arose to say *I saw*. How then could the thought arise to say *I did not see*."[web 5]

Later in life, he called his death experience *akrama mukti*, "sudden liberation", as opposed to the *krama mukti*, "gradual liberation" as in the Vedanta path of jnana yoga.[web 3][note 6] It resulted in a state of mind which he later described as "the state of mind of Iswara or the jnani:"[web 1]

After reading the language of the sacred books, I see it may be termed suddha manas [pure mind], akhandakara vritti [unbroken experience], prajna [true knowledge] etc.; that is, the state of mind of Iswara or the jnani."[web 1]

After this event, he lost interest in school studies, friends, and relations. He was absent-minded at school, "imagining and expecting God would suddenly drop down from Heaven before me".[web 3] Avoiding company, he preferred to sit alone, absorbed in concentration on this current or force,[29] and went daily to the Meenakshi Temple, ecstatically devoted to the images of the 63 Nayanars and of Nataraja, wanting "the same grace as was shown to those saints",[web 3] praying that he "should have the same bhakti that they had"[web 3] and "[weeping] that God should give me the same grace He gave to those saints".[web 3][11][note 7]

Knowing his family would not permit him to become a sanyassin and leave home, Venkataraman slipped away, telling his brother he needed to attend a special class at school.[31] Venkataraman boarded a train on 1 September 1896 and traveled to Tiruvannamalai where he remained for the rest of his life.[*citation needed*]

Tiruvannamalai temples (1896–1899)

Arunachaleswara Temple, Tiruvannamalai

Arunachaleswara temple (1896–1897)

On arriving in Tiruvannamalai, Maharshi went to the temple of Arunachaleswara.[32] The first few weeks he spent in the thousand-pillared hall, then shifted to other spots in the temple, and eventually to the Patala-lingam vault so that he might remain undisturbed. There, he spent days absorbed in such deep samādhi that he was unaware of the bites of vermin and pests. Seshadri Swamigal, a local saint, discovered him in the underground vault and tried to protect him.[31] After about six weeks in the Patala-lingam, he was carried out and cleaned up. For the next two months he stayed in the Subramanya Shrine, so unaware of his body and surroundings that food had to be placed in his mouth or he would have starved.

Gurumurtam temple (1897–1898)

In February 1897, six months after his arrival at Tiruvannamalai, Ramana moved to Gurumurtam, a temple about a mile away.[33] Shortly after his arrival a sadhu named Palaniswami went to see him.[34] Palaniswami's first darshan left him filled with peace and bliss, and from that time on he served Ramana as his permanent attendant. Besides physical protection, Palaniswami would also beg for alms, cook and prepare meals for himself and Ramana, and care for him as needed.[35] In May 1898 Ramana moved to a mango orchard next to Gurumurtam.[36]

Osborne wrote that during this time Ramana completely neglected his body.[35] He also ignored the ants which bit him incessantly.[33] Gradually, despite Ramana's desire for privacy, he attracted attention from visitors who admired his silence and austerities, bringing offerings and singing praises. Eventually a bamboo fence was built to protect him.[33]

While living at the Gurumurtam temple his family discovered his whereabouts. First, his uncle Nelliappa Iyer came and pleaded with him to return home, promising that the family would not disturb his ascetic life. Ramana sat motionless and eventually his uncle gave up.[37]

In September 1898 Ramana moved to the Shiva-temple at Pavalakkunru, one of the eastern spurs of Arunachala. He refused to return even though his mother begged him to.[38]" - Wikipedia on Ramana Maharshi, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramana_Maharshi#Adolescence_and_awakening_(1895%E2%80%931896)

In the early years of John Tan's journey right after his I AM realization at the age of 17, he was very engrossed with entering Nirvikalpa Samadhi and wanted to renounce to focus all his time abiding in Nirvikalpa Samadhi or absorption in Self/Pure Presence while shutting out all distractions of the external senses, however he faced resistance from family objections. The Pure Presence at this phase was only experienced as the Mind door and not extended to all the other

senses (more on this in Stage 4 and 5), so according to John Tan the tendency was to turn away or withdraw from the five senses (plus conceptual thoughts and impressions) to abide as the [formless] Self/Source [as pure consciousness].

“"When I was young, after the experience of I AM presence and read the book by Ramana Maharshi, I was so inspired and felt like giving up everything and follow the footsteps of Ramana to go reside in Mt Arunachala. 😆” - John Tan, 2018

On an interesting note, Ramana Maharshi has gone through two separate awakenings - first on the I AM and second one was about One Mind. After his first awakening, he spent much of his time in deep meditative absorptions/samadhi in caves, but after his second awakening he was integrated into his daily life and functionings, and no longer placed as much emphasis on entering special states of trance or nirvikalpa samadhi as previously, although he still entered into meditative samadhi. More details:
https://web.archive.org/web/20180109074321/http://www.mountainrunnerdoc.com/page/page/5213285.htm

Edmond Cigale will be coming out with a book in the near future that compares I AM, non dual, anatta and emptiness insights along with a detailed comparison of the states of the different types of Nirvikalpa Samadhis and Nirodha Samapatti. I have read the draft and I think it is a good read, so keep a lookout for his publication.

Soh shared on the AtR group:

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Group expert

+1

Ramana is into Thusness Stage 1 to 4, substantialist nondual but not anatta.
(see: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../ramana-maharshis...)
2009:
(10:01 PM) Thusness: actually kennethfolk should not belittle ramana maharishi and the advaita or vedanta practitioner
only in terms of insight we can talk about it.
(10:01 PM) AEN: kenneth belittle ramana meh
i tot he quote him
(10:02 PM) Thusness: not the jhanic experience.
(10:02 PM) AEN: wat you mean
(10:02 PM) Thusness: i am sure we are no where close to these practitioners in terms of jhanic experiences.
(10:02 PM) AEN: oic
(10:03 PM) Thusness: ability to sit for few hours doesn't mean anything to these practitioners.

(10:03 PM) AEN: ic.. ya ramana maharshi can enter samadhi for days or what and no need to eat etc 😛
(10:03 PM) Thusness: the absorption is another dimension.
(10:03 PM) AEN: oic
(10:03 PM) Thusness: so don't think we know a lot...
(10:03 PM) AEN: icic..
(10:04 PM) Thusness: certain thing needs practice.
just like exercise and body building
need to develop the skill through discipline
(10:04 PM) Thusness: and need to give up all worldly stuff for it.
(10:04 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:05 PM) Thusness: needs to be vegetarian
(10:05 PM) AEN: you mean meditation?
need vegetarian
(10:05 PM) Thusness: without that, certain sort of experiences will not be there.
(10:05 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:05 PM) Thusness: yeah
needs even fasting also
(10:05 PM) AEN: what kind of experience can arise due to vegetarianism
(10:06 PM) Thusness: these practitioners have a lot of discipline and sacrifices...
(10:06 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:06 PM) Thusness: so don't think we know all.
(10:06 PM) AEN: thats why ramana left home and entered seclusion for years rite
(10:06 PM) Thusness: yeah
(10:06 PM) AEN: btw how does vegetarianism help
wat kind of experience
(10:07 PM) Thusness: in terms of insights, due to the arising of prajna wisdom, we have deeper clarity
not that we are superior in terms of experience.
don't mistaken

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That being said, anatta is crucial for liberation
“He [XYZ Rinpoche] focused more on awareness as background. Without realizing the nature of mind and phenomena, karma continues to be generated.
When there is a background, one can't liberate actually but generates subtle karma IMO. Only through realizing the nature of mind and phenomena one can self liberates (karma).” – John Tan, 2018
“There is thinking, no thinker
There is hearing, no hearer
There is seeing, no seer
In thinking, just thoughts
In hearing, just sounds
In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.”
.....
Depending on the conditions of an individual, it may not be obvious that it is “always thought watching thought rather than a watcher watching thought.” or "the watcher is that thought." Because this is the key insight and a step that cannot afford to be wrong along the path of liberation, I cannot help but with some disrespectful tone say,
For those masters that taught,
“Let thoughts arise and subside,
See the background mirror as perfect and be unaffected.”
With all due respect, they have just “blah” something nice but deluded.
Rather,
See that there is no one behind thoughts.
First, one thought then another thought.
With deepening insight it will later be revealed,
Always just this, One Thought!
Non-arising, luminous yet empty!
John Tan, 2009, the two stanzas of anatta in On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../on-anatta...

“The most direct and succinct explanation of anatta is that there is no actual seer of sights, no actual hearer of sound, etc., there is no actual internal point of reference, or subject, that is apprehending alleged referents, or objects.” – Kyle Dixon, 2020

—-

Also i shared before:

Soh Wei Yu Also, non-dual luminosity is blissful but not liberating, emptiness is what liberates. Other religions focus on the non-dual luminosity but not necessarily the same as the liberation focused in buddhadharma:

Session Start: Sunday, 12 September, 2010

"(12:15 AM) Thusness: Thorough ‘aliveness’ also requires ‘you’ to disappear. It is an experience of being totally ‘transparent’ and without boundaries. If you do not fall back to a background, these experiences are quite obvious, you will not miss it.

(12:22 AM) Thusness: In addition to bringing this ‘taste’ to the foreground, you must also ‘realize’ the difference between wrong and right view. There is also a difference in saying “Different forms of Aliveness” and “There is just breath, sound, scenery...”

(12:23 AM) Thusness: that these arising dependently originates.

(12:24 AM) Thusness: In the former case, realize how the mind is manifesting a subtle tendency of attempting to ‘pin’ and locate something that inherently exists. The mind feels uneasy and needs to seek for something due to its existing paradigm.

. It is not simply a matter of expression for communication sake but a habit that runs deep because it lacks a ‘view’ that is able to cater for reality that is dynamic, ungraspable, non-local , center-less and interdependent.

(12:25 AM) Thusness: Otherwise the mind will continue to locate and seek.

(12:26 AM) Thusness: Lastly also understand that 'bliss' is the result of luminosity, 'liberation' is the result of the insight of emptiness."

"(1:28 PM) Thusness: means you truly see the erroneous view of dualistic and inherent view

(1:28 PM) AEN: icic..

(1:28 PM) Thusness: then you will understand what liberates

a blissful state does not liberates u"

"Hi Simpo,

How have you been getting on? I am planning for my retirement.

I think after stabilizing non-dual experience and maturing the insight of anatta, practice must turn towards ‘self-releasing’ and ‘dispassion’ rather than intensifying ‘non-dual’ luminosity. Although being bare in attention or naked in awareness will help in dissolving the sense of ‘I’ and division, we must also look into dissolving the sense of ‘mine’. In my opinion, dissolving of the sense of ‘I’ does not equate to dissolving the sense of ‘mine’ and attachment to possessions can still be strong even after very stable non-dual experience. This is because the former realization only mange to eliminate the dualistic tendency while the latter requires us to embody and actualize the right view of ‘emptiness’. Very seldom do we realize it has a lot to do with our ‘view’ that we hold in our deep most consciousness. We must allow our luminous essence to meet differing conditions to realise the latent deep. All our body cells are imprinted and hardwired to ‘hold’. Not to under-estimate it. " - 2010?

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Angelo Gerangelo
Angelo Gerangelo Soh Wei Yu all this is so good thanks for posting !

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On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

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John Tan used to follow a Master (from what I read, Ch'an tradition if I'm not wrong but stays in Thailand) who was at the I AM stage. His samadhi was so deep that burning off his fingers left him unaffected. That would be equivalent to Ramana's level of samadhi.
Excerpt from https://docs.google.com/.../1MYAVGmj8JD8IAU8rQ7krwFv.../edit
John Tan: [01:56:24] Tell you when I was young. If you give me a cave I will be inside, meditating. Yeah. I went to the cave. Last time my Ming Shan Shi Fu, very popular one. You ever heard of Ming Shan Shi Fu? Uh, he's actually a Thailand monk. He single person walk from Singapore to Thailand. Barefoot. When you want to reach the mountain, he 7 steps (3 steps?) one bow. He single handedly build the whole temple up. Ming Shan Shi Fu (Soh: see bio at https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../wat-tham-khao-rup...). Very popular one. Right. Then he he he is a ku xing sheng (ascetic monk). He mo he nian jing, mo he dian huo. means they use the finger. Use the finger. Put clay.

Burn the finger one you know, burn the finger away one and kept chanting, very popular one. He burn away his whole finger, you know, burn away his whole finger. Not only one. Then he got sick. Ah, fever. Everything right? After he recovered. Do again. He do again you know? So his hand, his hand No finger. Got one finger right. Burn away. What? Then he feel okay one you know. Then he chop away his ears you know.
Speaker3: [01:57:40] Serious?
John Tan: [01:57:42] He's toe don't know, he take out one you know.
Speaker4: [01:57:45] Can middle way bro? (Laughs)
John Tan: [01:57:52] His disciples is hell lot one right... But he liked me a lot. He liked me a lot. So when when I want to get married, he say he got money? He say what you want. He want buy for me present, I say, I say shi fu, no need. Then when he was in what right. He one person cook for all of us. Then he always go to the mountain, right. Collect those uh, orphans. In Thailand, there's a lot of baby just live in the forest. Oh, so he go and collect all those babies to his temple and then feed and then become monk. Those are those. Become monk, young monk. So he's like. He's like his son. Like that. He collect, then he keep on. Then the people donate. A lot of people like us will go and donate. Then he one day, then I go to the the mountain. I go to the mountain. It's it's a very big mountain. Is he go and single handedly build one from the the bricks? People don't want the bricks, he take. Then go and slowly form a temple up. Then in the mountain, one person. Go and do it. The whole whole whole thing. Then he. He was meditating. He do kwan yin dong (?), then he meditating. I also meditate with him because I. I'm quite high in meditation. So I can sit with him one, you know? Uh, not like now like that. Uh, means, I was quite, quite, uh, fanatic one.
Speaker3: [01:59:19] Yeah.
John Tan: [01:59:20] Those very fanatic. So I meditate with him, challenge him, he sit already like that... don't (know?) slept or what. ... I do, like one hour. Two hours. Wah, siong (tough) already. How come he's still meditating? Last time. One hour pain already. Then after that, he go to the room and say. Come, come, come to my room. Come to my room. Then you got a group of. A disciple. What? Okay, let's meditate. Then he just like that... then he just like that, after he just like that put his hands... then he go into deep state already you know. Then I was meditating. Wah! Then all the disciples cannot stand it any more. Then I just sit down there. Then I say a lot of people cannot stand it anymore, then I still meditate. Last time meditating... you got a cave that's why I say I will go in and meditate one.
Speaker3: [02:00:20] This after 17?
John Tan: [02:00:22] After 17, because I kept on meditating. So I keep on meditating on meditating on. So he was there, then he meditate, then later he don't know, wake up or slept or wake up. He wake up. Wah! Then he start work.
Soh: [02:00:37] Is the teacher into I AM?
John Tan: [02:00:37] Yah, he's I AM.
Speaker6: [02:00:40] Sorry. Just now said the finger burn. Then... That one means uh. He's in such a state that the mind shuts down, right? So there's no sensation.
John Tan: [02:00:52] Yes. Mo he...
Speaker6: [02:00:53] More like because he's a monk. But people go through a surgery without GA. They are not monks or.
John Tan: [02:01:01] Yes it's possible also. You look at you look... Yes, it's possible because, uh, it's possible one, you know, the person that kena shot the you know about the person, the five people that died.

John Tan: [02:01:13] Bmw, you know about the Tanjong Pagar one, right? You saw the lady, the the girlfriend, the girlfriend, the girlfriend. The girlfriend was burning already. She went into the fire, you know, she went into the fire and trying to save the what, she got burnt. The whole body burn. She she came out. The whole body is still burning, right? Actually, she doesn't know it, you know. She don't even know that she got burn. She doesn't know. She was shocked, you know, intense shock, you know. So there are there are different states. The, the the intensity of the shock, the intensity of the bliss, or what, you can. So she was in intense shock. The whole body is burning like she ran out. Then she still walk around. She didn't know that she was on fire, you know. But her body was burnt.
Speaker3: [02:02:03] Right, right.
John Tan: [02:02:03] Then the the guy also clown one lah. Correct or not? Don't know how to take things quickly cover already. The guy was walking around, you know. Then after that. After prolonged. Then what? Then she realized. Then what? But she was in that time, she was in intense shock. So she come out, then she was burnt. You look at the monk that actually ah, uh, burn themselves alive. They just sit down there. They don't even feel pain. They just ru ding (enter into samadhi), won't feel pain one. I think my Shi Fu is easily there, is easily there. Their ding li (power of samadhi) is what, if not because of the Anatta, probably you give me another ten, 15 years. I probably that kind of stage already.
Speaker3: [02:02:53] Why is... because of anatta?
John Tan: [02:02:55] Because I don't meditate so much.
Speaker3: [02:02:57] Because of anatta you don't meditate so much?
John Tan: [02:03:00] Because I don't find the need. (Soh: What John Tan meant is that he does not need to meditate in order to enter non-dual Presence in a state of nirvikalpa samadhi, as non-dual Presence and samadhi is found in all moments post-anatta. However it does not mean meditation becomes unimportant. John Tan often emphasizes that meditation continues to be very important after anatta for further progression. John Tan sits 3-4 hours everyday even now and tells me to sit 2 hours everyday. Do read: https://awakeningtoreality.com/.../letting-go-of-path_25...)
Speaker3: [02:03:01] Oh, I see, I see, I see. Okay, okay.
John Tan: [02:03:04] But last time is different. You know, when I was young was very fanatic.
Speaker3: [02:03:09] Right? Right, right.
Soh: [02:03:09] Like Ramana Maharshi, he just sat in the cave for days without eating.
John Tan: [02:03:13] Even with, uh, I met the Indian. Indian because that time I was. I always go and meet those. Because of I AM. I always go and meet.
John Tan: [02:03:22] Uh, the Hindu. Vedanta, Advaita people. So dance with them, sleep with them, eat with them. Go and sleep overnight with them. Even in NTYou (National Technological University) and what. So I also sit with them for hours. I sit one. Yeah, just eat, then sit, then sit, then eat, then sit, then eat, then sit. Just eat and sit. Then have lecture I AM, Talk, talk talk talk. To the student.

- 16 m
  16 minutes ago

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“

David Brown

The section above from Culadasa's The Mind Illuminated could easily be interpreted in different ways by different people. The problem is with the word 'consciousness'. I prefer to use Awareness Without Content in place of Consciousness Without Content to emphasise the complete difference from sense consciousness. For most people, I think it's difficult to know Awareness Without Content (cessation) clearly when sense consciousness remains, and very often it's confused with the mind merely going very quiet. Cessation leads to deeper understanding than any of the stages listed in the A2R system. as in all of them there does remain a subtle arisingness generated by remnants of what we call 'self'. Cessation implies nothing arising at all, no activation of Dependent Origination. With total cessation the nature of that subtle generation of self/consciousness/ mind/ world becomes clear. Cessation can happen while sense consciousness is operating, and that reveals clearly the nature of generation of what we call 'me'. But if it happens while conscious, I think it is easy to miss the deeper aspect of the Buddha's teaching on Dependent Origination. Therefore there is enormous benefit if cessation/ Awareness Without Content happens during deep sleep. I doubt it is possible to fully understand the Buddha's teaching on Dependent origination without cessation during deep sleep.

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Soh Wei Yu

Admin

David Brown

What you are describing is just nirvikalpa samadhi in the I AM. It is not particularly special and is not unknown to us in AtR. John Tan, I and many others have experienced tremendously blissful samadhi absorption in Self. As I wrote recently, John Tan sat for hours each time in nirvikalpa samadhi with his Ch'an master in Thailand during his I AM stage. He could sit all day and actually almost became a monk and renunciant like Ramana Maharshi to focus entirely his time in absorption in the Self without the distractions of other sensory phenomena back when he was 17 but was stopped by his family.

Ramana Maharshi said,

"Abiding permanently in any of these samadhis, either Savikalpa or Nirvikalpa, is Sahaja. What is body-consciousness? It is the insentient body plus consciousness. Both these must lie in another consciousness which is absolute and unaffected, and ever-abiding, with or without the body-consciousness. What does it the matter whether the body-consciousness is lost or retained, provided one is holding on to that Pure Consciousness? Total absence of body-consciousness has the advantage of making the Samadhi more intense, although it makes no difference in the knowledge of the Supreme. (Ramana Maharshi, GR, 88.) "

Here he is saying the type of nirvikalpa samadhi where all senses are shut and one is merely absorbed in Self simply makes the samadhi or absorption in Self more intense, but it makes no difference to Self-Knowledge.

I will paste more excerpts in the following posts.

□

□

Soh Wei Yu

Admin
And yes I have experienced total cessation [of sensory and mental phenomena] and pure formless nondual clear light in deep sleep. It can also be intensely blissful, just the bliss of pure presence. I actually wrote some of those experiences in the sleep chapter towards the end of the AtR Guide.

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Sim Pern Chong (who was at the I AM phase when he first encountered John Tan back in 2004 and was the first to break through to anatta and emptiness back in 2006 to 2008) wrote more than ten years ago:
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../a-compilation-of...
realization: Oh yes Simpo, can I just ask how you realised the I AM years ago?
Simpo: There are actually 2 significant events:
1. In the 1980s when i was a teenager, i sat down to meditate for the first time. I experienced great bliss. In this meditation, i experienced 'no ultimate right or wrong' aka non-judgemental and is soaked in a vast ocean of bliss for a few days. Haha... i thought i was enlightened. On hindsight now, i know that i was not. That is why now when people write about non-dual to meant 'no right/wrong' I know which stage they are at.
2. In the 1990s, i join a meditation class that held sessions every Sunday at a Buddhist temple. I was learning one-point meditation. One afternoon when i was meditating at home, all the sensory impressions stopped including thoughts. I was in a state of 'No-thoughts'. One may think that when there are no thoughts, one must be unconscious. No there is no unconsciousness. Instead what was being experienced was pure Presence/awareness. However due to not understanding the nature of consciousness and reality, this awareness was experienced as an Eternal Witness/Observer. This is the pure experience of I AM presence.
...
In my case, the initial experience happened during a meditation which led me to the misassumption of 'I AM'. The experience is pure, but the latter interpretation of it was wrong.
In 'No-I' experience, one simply realised that there is no self in any experience even when consciousness is rolling own. There can be thinking, but there is no thinker.
On the other hand, in complete consciousness blank-out, yet awareness persists, there is not a single thought or any form of mental formation. Basically, there is no thinking, no mental image or any form of consciousness that we normally have. It will be distinctive because it is this experience that will allow one to see for the first time the difference between mental-mixed consciousness and pure presence.
Complete mental formation shut down and yet awareness still exist, it is not the same as sleep.
Personally, I don't see a point in maintaining witnessing even into sleep. It is really a desire to have that expereince of Presence.
...
I think Eckhart Tolle may have been suffering alot and suddenly he 'let go' of trying to work out his problems. This results in a dissociation from thoughts which give rise to the experience of Presence.

To me, 'I AM' is an experience of Presence, it is just that only one aspect of Presence is experienced which is the 'all-pervading' aspect. The non-dual and emptiness aspect are not experienced.. Because non-dual is not realised (at I AM stage), a person may still use effort in an attempt to 'enter' the Presence. This is because, at the I AM stage, there is an erroneous concept that there is a relative world make up of thoughts AND there is an 'absolute source' that is watching it. The I AM stage person will make attempts to 'dissociated from the relative world' in order to enter the 'absolute source'.
However, at Non-dual (& further..) stage understanding, one have understood that the division into a relative world and an absolute source has NEVER occcured and cannot be... Thus no attempt/effort is truly required.
□
Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Edmond Cigale, who realised anatta after I conversed with him back in DhO and those conversations somehow triggered his further investigation and breakthrough into nondual and anatta back in 2011, wrote this: [link redacted]
Where he compared the different types of samadhi he has gone through. Please don't share this file outside as it is going to be published into a book but here is an excerpt.
Back in his I AM phase he was able to enter kevala nirvikalpa samadhi at will,
" this context, Sri Ramana Maharshi used to say: "That which is not present in deep dreamless sleep is not real."(quoted in Wilber 1998). Well, I have faced such notions withslight apprehension. How can emotions and thoughts (mine or those of others) be unreal, if they obviously exist? Yes, they are not absolutely real, as far as the Causal Self is concerned, but they exist nonetheless. I tried to compensate the inner disharmonyby focusing on impersonal aspect of the "I am" presence, trying to realize and hold on to "That which is only Real" during my wake consciousness. I have failed to achieve that.This tendency, however,eventually yieldedfree flow and easy entry into the Causalstate samādhi at will, but that was all. There was no way (for me) to handle the relative sensory input with mere Awareness of the naked Truth by entering samādhi at will.There was always this duality present: Me or the Absolute Reality on one hand, and the world drama of sensory input, on the other; almost unperceivable subtle tension and clear disharmony were always present.Obviously, my Causal realization was not perfected yet (and the nondual was not known, yet)."
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Soh Wei Yu
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From Edmond's text:

	kevala nirbikalpa-samādhi	*nirodha-samāpatti*
Sensory input	Non-existing, only the Self is present, totally	Completely shut down, nothing remains, no Self either
Time	No time, only pure Awareness is present, nothing else	No time, no awareness, nothing, no non-nothing
Space	No space, only pure Awareness present, Radiant and Pristine	No space, no awareness, nothing, no non-nothing
Cognitive processes (perception, memory, decision making etc.)	Shut down, non-existing, only the Self is fully present, nothing else	Complete and total void
Awareness	Only awareness as the Source is directly experienced, nothing else – only Absolute Consciousness	No awareness, no consciousness, no nothing, no non-nothing
Others	There are no others, only this One Truth shining with Absolute Presence	No others, no movement in the mind as it is completely shut down, no awareness, no consciousness
Ego (I & Mine, ahamkara, Authentic Self)	Does not exist, dead for the time being.	No awareness, no consciousness therefore no ego.
Body*	Appears as dead	Appears as dead
Breathing**	Suspended	Suspended

Soh Wei Yu

Admin

This state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi is also described even by Theravada monks like Ajahn Brahmavamso:

“When the Body Disappears. [text snipped, posted in AtR guide elsewhere]

Pitfalls and Dangers of the I AM Phase

“If at the "I AM" phase you were to practice wrongly, I think you will be stuck probably until old age with little breakthrough.” - John Tan, 2011

One of the most common pitfalls is thinking that the I AM is the final, ultimate Truth. Most people who realized I AM think that way and just stagnate there. As I mentioned before, as an estimate based on my (Soh)’s decade+ years of encountering, reading and conversing with many realized practitioners and teachers, roughly 90% of any given realized person is simply having the realization of I AMness, 8% are about One Mind, and only 2% or less are having anatta realization and further.

“Though buddha nature is plainness and most direct, these are still the steps. If one does not know the process and said ‘yes this is it’... then it is extremely misleading. For 99 percent [of ‘realized’/’enlightened’ persons] what one is talking about is "I AMness", and has not gone beyond permanence, still thinking [of] permanence, formless... ...all and almost all will think of it along the line of "I AMness", all are like the grandchildren of "AMness", and that is the root cause of duality.” - John Tan, 2007

As Adyashanti pointed out,

"Emptiness (Soh: Adyashanti’s Emptiness means ‘I AMness’ here of John Tan’s Stage 1, not the Buddhistic Emptiness/Sunyata of John Tan’s Stage 6 discussed in this guide) is not the totality of what you are. Emptiness is a profound aspect of what you are, it's a profound taste of your true nature, it's not the totality of what you are any than getting up in the morning and feeling good is the totality of what you are, or feeling bad is a totality of what you are... ...Whenever you touch upon a deep truth, suchness of reality, your true nature, each aspect feels like it's total and complete and all-inclusive at that moment. So that's why teachers have a very hard time getting through to people when they have an initial experience of anything because if it's an initial experience of reality it feels totally complete and there is a certain innate confidence that arises within you. Not an egoic confidence but a confidence that comes from reality."

Other pitfalls in the I AM phase include:

~ Reifying Host and Guest (An Unchanging Awareness)

There is a tendency at the I AM phase to reify the space of awareness as the unchanging background, Absolute host, and container, of all the passing contents of thoughts, perceptions, feelings and sensations. Instead of focusing on reifying and solidifying this image of a changeless and inherently existing Host, we should instead focus on the four aspects of I AM as described above. Otherwise we will get stuck in the I AM phase.

During my I AM phase, I saw Awareness as an unchanging host, like an infinite empty space where the ‘guests’ of all

transient phenomena come and go leaving the formless host of awareness untouched. John Tan subsequently had a conversation with me, from Soh's Journal and Notes on Spiritual Awakening:

Soh wrote: "14 May 2010

Walking/Jogging/Running meditation

While jogging just now, I 'forgot' my mind and body. It feels like I'm the still presence in which the world moves through. Instead of being a body running on the road from here to there, it's seen that I am the space that encompasses the whole world and the whole world moves through me. I am not moving. The world is moving through me.

It feels like you're running on the treadmill, you're not actually moving! Except that the scenery moves through you.

You can practice seeing this next time when you walk or jog. This space of awareness is unmoving, whether or not the world is moving.

Later I was reminded of this video http://www.headless.org/videos/still_point.htm

15 May 2010

From: http://www.taozen.se/host.htm

Host and Guest

In the Surangama Sutra Arya Ajnatakaundinya puts the question: "What is the difference between the permanent and the changing?

He answers by giving an example of a traveler who stops at an Inn. The traveler eats, sleeps and then continues on his journey. He doesn't stay to settle in the Inn, but pays his bill and leaves.

But what with the Innkeeper? He doesn't leave. He keeps on staying at the Inn to receive and take leave of guests, because that is where he lives.

"Therefore, I declare that the changing is guest and the permanent is host", says Arya Ajnatakaundinya.

In that way we identify all thoughts that comes and goes as changing, travelers that arrives and leaves and that doesn't need any further investigation.

Our Buddha-self is the host who lets the traveler - the thought - leave without hindrance. A good host doesn't keep up the traveler at his departure.

Another way to illustrate this is by imaging an empty space with a sun ray shining in. In this ray you'll see a lot of dust in the empty room. The dust is moving but the space is empty. That that is still and clear is called space, that that is moving is called dust, because that is the being of dust.

Guest and dust refers to illusory thought, while the host and space refers to the Buddha-nature.

This shows that the permanent Buddha-nature doesn't follow the illusory thoughts in their coming and going, rising and falling. So if one is unaffected by things, there won't be any hindrances even if one is surrounded by the ten thousand things.

Illusory thoughts comes and goes by themselves and don't hinder the True Nature of Suchness.

15 May 2010

Those who wish to practice self-inquiry should read Methods of Practice in the Chan Hall and the Essentials of Chan Practice by Ch'an Master Hsu Yun

15 May 2010

Just had a discussion with John. I think there is something very important to caution readers here based on what he told me.

The experience of the Witness is important, and is undeniable. The Certainty of Being is a natural certainty that cannot be negated. This is not wrong. You cannot deny your own existence (how could you? if you try to deny it, who is it denying it?)

There is nothing wrong with experiencing directly without intermediary the pure sense of existence. But after this direct experience, one should refine the understanding, our views, our insights. Instead of deviating from the right view, reinforcing the wrong view, after the experience.

John also told me that what I have experienced has nothing to do with 'beingness being unchanging, constant and permanent'. Yet I was re-enforcing this wrong view into my consciousness like chanting. He told me not to do that, and that what I described is not my direct experience, but instead it is my mind playing tricks. What is experienced is just luminosity, non-conceptuality, directness, nothing more than that. So instead of describing what I experienced, I was reminding myself what is not true. We actually never experience anything unchanging.

He also said that though I am experiencing the "host and guest", he told me not to focus on 'permanent, unchanging, and independent' aspect as by doing so with a few more months of intense training, I will become stuck for decades in the formless realms and it will be difficult to get out. Instead, I should be focusing on the impersonality aspect, and the four aspects of I AM he talked to me about, then afterwards experience non dual and anatta.

It is not about denying the Witness, but refining our insight of it:

- what is meant by non-dual?
- what is meant by non-conceptual?
- what is meant by being spontaneous?
- what is the 'impersonality' aspect?
- what is luminosity?

p.s. just had a conversation with John to clarify on the 'unmoving' nature of Awareness in Shurangama Sutra.

I think it is pretty clear in explaining how the 'unmoving' nature of awareness is not the Hindu understanding of 'permanence of Self, impermanence of objects'.

....

John: The Hinayanist is not what that is wrong. Some of the sutra like to belittle Hinayanist. :P

(Note by Soh: It is known nowadays that Shurangama Sutra, the scripture from which the notion of Host and Guest comes from, is a Chinese invention - it talks about Taoist 'xiens' (immortals) and is evidently a Chinese composition not of Indian origins, with no counterparts in the Tibetan canon, a topic discussed in My opinion on Shurangama Sutra

Mahayana Sutras and Vajrayana Tantras are composed later by unknown authors showing development over time, in contrast to Pali suttas which stays closest to the Buddha's original words, a topic discussed in Yogacara vs Madhyamaka, Authorship of Mahayana Sutras - which is not to say that they are any less valuable as it should be noted that Mahayana sutras are generally very profound especially on its elaborations on the emptiness and non-arising of phenomena.)

What Buddha [Soh: i.e. Shurangama Sutra] is trying to teach is about non-movement, but the illustration is not a good one in my opinion. In non-dual insight, nothing moves. When your mind follows phenomena and dwell in dualistic concept, phenomena appears moving. But when insight arises, nothing moves. Now for there to be moving, what must happen? If you cannot measure, cannot grasp, cannot find its locality, from where is it moving? If awareness hasn't moved then how does knowing arise? How is there awareness? IF awareness cannot be said to be moving, then how can we say thoughts are moving? If one taste of both nature and essence are directly experienced, then there is true insight.

If you cling to thoughts or discard thoughts, that is also moving. If you see the luminous and empty nature, nothing moves. Get it?

An Eternal Now: I think so

John: If you say you saw something...that is awareness. Do you consider that to be moving or not moving? You see the words flow...

An Eternal Now: The pure experience is not moving, if we measure it then we see movement

John: If you are looking from the perspective of object, everything is moving. If you are looking from the perspective of awareness, nothing seems to move. If you realize luminous essence and empty nature, then nothing also moves. The former is One-Mind, the latter is no-mind. But no-mind can have varying degrees of insight and experience. Though people might say it is conceptual to say or categorize further, but it is a skilful means." - A journal entry in Soh's E-Book

In the I AM phase the spacious all-pervading aspect of Presence is reified into a static background, while in the further phase of anatta, the space-like, boundless field of consciousness/universe is experienced and realized to be the foreground without being abstracted and reified into a background.

"Hi AEN,

Yes not to be fixated but also not to objectify the "spaciousness" otherwise "spaciousness" is no less fixated. The 'space' appears appealing only to a mind that abstracts but to a fully participating and involving mind, such "spaciousness" has immediately sets itself apart, distancing itself from inseparable. Emptiness is never a behind background but a fully partaking foreground manifesting as the arising and passing phenomena absence of a center. Therefore understand 'spaciousness' not like sky but like passing clouds and flowing water, manifesting whenever condition is. If 'Emptiness' has made us more fixated and immobilized this innate freedom of our non-dual luminosity, then it is 'stubborn emptiness'.

Nevertheless, no matter what said, it is always inadequate. If we want to fully realize the inexpressible, be willing to give up all centers and point of references that manifests in the form of 'who', 'when' and 'where'. Just give up the entire sense of self then instantly all things are spontaneously perfected.

Just a sharing, nothing intense.

Happy New Year! :)

...

There is no lack of clarity in whatever that is manifesting, simply forgo the self and be fully participating." - John Tan, 2009

"Therefore the so called "Clear Aware Space" is no more special than this moment of arising sound or passing scent. The failure to recognize that all apparent arising and passing transience is non other than the Dharmakaya is the problem of all problems.

When a pith instruction like "Relax and fully open to whatever is" is taught to a mind that is still under strong influence of dualistic tendencies, it is easy for such a mind to read and practice in the form of clinging to the "Aware Space" and shunting away from the transience, thereby setting itself infinitely apart unknowingly.

If however there is maturity of insight that whatever arises share the same taste -- luminous yet empty (via twofold emptiness), then practice is naturally and simply unreserved opening to whatever is, it cannot be otherwise. There can be no movement, duality and preference from this to that for there is no 'this' that is more 'this' than that.

With clear recognition and unperturbed practice of complete unreserved opening to whatever is, all transience will reveal to posses the same taste of non-dual samadhi and self-liberation that we once thought to be the monopoly of the so called "Clear Aware Space".

It is therefore advisable that after the direct experience and realization of the pure sense of existence, a practitioner further penetrates anatta and the empty nature of phenomena. These insights are necessary and should not be considered "long cut". It will help a practitioner better appreciate the art of great ease in time to come.

My 2 cents.

The degree of "un-contrivance",
Is the degree of how unreserved and fearless we open to whatever is.
For whatever arises is mind, always seen, heard, tasted and experienced.
What that is not seen, not heard and not experienced,
Is our conceptual idea of what mind is.

Whenever we objectify the "brilliance, the pristine-ness" into an entity that is formless,
It becomes an object of grasp that prevents the seeing of the "forms",
the texture and the fabric of awareness.
The tendency to objectify is subtle,
we let go of 'selfness' yet unknowingly grasped 'nowness' and 'hereness'.
Whatever arises merely dependently originates, needless of who, where and when.

All experiences are equal, luminous yet empty of self-nature.
Though empty it has not in anyway denied its vivid luminosity.

Liberation is experiencing mind as it is.
Self-Liberation is the thorough insight that this liberation is always and already is;
Spontaneously present, naturally perfected!" – John Tan to Mr. J, 2012

"He has realized I AM, not just an experience. Impersonality is also clear and there are intermitent non-dual experiences but has mistaken the death of the ego as anatta. Focus on forgetting the 'beingness' and leave no trace of 'beingness' until the background is completely gone, always only the phenomenon in its primordial purity." – John Tan on Mr. P, 2011

"Be it Theravada, Mahayana or Vajrayana; be it Dzogchen, Mahamudra or Zen; they do not deviate from the definitive view of the 3 universal characteristics of dharma. Therefore experiences and realizations must always be authenticated with right view, otherwise we end in wonderland that is neither here nor there.

The "who am I" of advaita and "before birth who am I" may have the same initial "realization" -- the face to face direct authentication of one's original face, and followed by a series of similar mind-shaking experiences but when subject to madhyamaka ultimate analysis, they fall short of the prajna that buddhism is talking about. Therefore keep the realization but refine the view." – John Tan, 2020, to someone at the I AM phase

"Many Zen and Ch'an masters do point to a similar realization as Hinduism's Atman, however as some of them clarified, such as Phillip Kapleau Roshi, it is simply an initial realization and the realization is to be refined later on. Hinduism's Atman is the direct authentication of the aspect of the luminous clarity and Presence of our Buddha-nature, but its empty nature ('no mind' as taught by Bodhidharma) is realised later on. Prior to that refinement of insight, Buddha-nature can be somewhat reified into Atman-Brahman.

For example, Phillip Kapleau Roshi mentioned in his book "Straight to the Heart of Zen: Eleven Classic Koans & Their Inner Meanings", the two distinct phases of realization in Zen practice that corresponds to what I personally term "I AM realization" and "anatta~total exertion":

"...A shallow kensho is not fully satisfying. One has seen into constant change, it is true, and into the formless Self as well - that which makes change possible. One has caught a glimpse of both change and changelessness. But it's only a glimpse, and it is not enough, because in reality, the two worlds of change and changelessness are not really two at all. After a time this initial seeing makes us want to go further, deeper. Instinctively we know that it's only well-chewed food that nourishes and satisfies. This we might take as meaning long training through which we more fully integrate our understanding into our daily lives. Our enlightenment is fully digested. Now change is Changelessness. This is what keeps away hunger and uncertainty, anxiety, fear, and above all unsatisfactoriness, the constant feeling of being on edge, alienated, separated - 'a stranger and afraid', as the poet A. E. Housman wrote, 'in a world I never made.' At last we know real peace.

The verse says: 'This one instant, as it is, is an infinite number of kalpas.' What is a kalpa? The sutras describe a kalpa as the length of time it would take a heavenly being, adeva, sweeping its gossamer wings across the top of the mile-high mountain once each year to wear that mountain down to the ground. This one instant is a kalpa. All time is in this instant, and an infinite number of kalpas are, at the time, this one instant. All time means past, present, and future....

...if our mind is entirely free from both time and timelessness, it we are living fully and wholly every moment, every moment is everything; all of time is in each full, vitally alive moment. If one has truly seen into time and timelessness - if one has really become time itself - then there is no notion of time or timelessness to hinder or bind..."" – Soh, 2020, Is Mind Unchanging

"Actually the I AM is a very important, in fact crucial realization even in various traditions of Buddhism. It should not just be relegated as "merely a non-Buddhist insight that Buddhists should skip". I provided plenty of quotes in AtR guide to demonstrate this point.

AtR guide simply puts it in its proper place and explains how to navigate those territories without getting stuck in wrong views." – Soh, 2020

"AEN posted a great site about what I am trying to convey. Do go through the videos. I will divide what that are being discussed in the videos into the method, the view and the experience for ease of illustration as follows:

1. The method is what that is commonly known as self enquiry.
2. The view currently we have is dualistic. We see things in terms of subject/object division.
3. The experience can be further divided into the followings:

3.1 A strong individual sense of identity

3.2 An oceanic experience free from conceptualization.
This is due to the practitioner freeing himself from conceptuality, from labels and symbols. The mind continuous disassociates itself from all labeling and symbols.

3.3 An oceanic experience dissolving into everything.
The period of non-conceptuality is prolonged. Long enough to dissolve the mind/body 'symbolic' bond and therefore inner and outer division is temporarily suspended.

The experience for 3.2 and 3.3 are transcendental and are precious. However these experiences are commonly misinterpreted and distorted by objectifying these experiences into an entity that is "ultimate, changeless and independent". The objectified experience is known as Atman, God or Buddha Nature by the speaker in the videos. It is known as the experience of "I AM" with differing degree of intensity of non-conceptuality. Usually practitioners that have experienced 3.2 and 3.3 find it difficult to accept the doctrine of Anatta and Emptiness. The experiences are too clear, real and blissful to discard. They are overwhelmed.

Before we go further, why do you think these experiences are distorted?

(hint: The view currently we have is dualistic. We see things in terms of subject/object division.)" – John Tan, 2008

""Without using any languages, 'I', 'me' or any signs or symbols, how is 'I' experienced?"

Of all teachings, no teaching is more important than a direct 'touch' of our Buddha essence; but of all dangers, none is more dangerous than misinterpreting our essence after the 'touch'.

The 'touch' of the pure sense of existence is often wrongly understood due to our karmic tendencies.

Use the doctrine of Anatta and Emptiness as antidote after the 'touch'." – John Tan, 2008

~ Reifying a Universal Consciousness

This reification comes when the impersonality aspect of the Four Aspects of I AM is experienced.

"The Tendency to Extrapolate a Universal Consciousness
24th May 2010 entry of my e-book:

Originally posted by An Eternal Now:
Your mirror-like awareness has no limitations, has no boundaries and edges. It does not belong to any object that appears on it. It does not belong to the body-mind object that you identify as 'yourself'. It does not belong to anything. But everything arise from that...
...Impersonal/Universal Awareness is animating or 'powering' the body and the personality like electricity is powering the TV to show the images on screen. Whatever happens on screen is 'run' only by the 'power' of the One Mind. Everything and everyone is the spontaneous functioning of One Mind, there is no individual doers/actors/selves.

Just had a conversation with John about this.

He told me that there is a problem of saying more than what is necessary, and that it comes from a clinging mind. That is, stripping of 'individuality' and 'personality' becoming a 'Universal Mind' is an extrapolation, a deduction. It is not direct experience like "in thinking just thoughts", "in perceptions just perceptions", "in seeing just the seen" - just 'what is'.

Similarly when I experienced 'impersonality', it is just 'impersonality', but it becomes a 'Universal Mind' due to clinging which prevents seeing. And if I further reinforce this idea, it becomes a made belief and appears true and real.

Therefore when I said 'impersonality', I am not being blinded as I am merely describing what I have experienced. This Mind is still an individual mindstream, and though impersonality leads one to have the sort of 'Universal Mind' kind of sensation, one must correctly understand it.

Buddhism never denies this mind stream, it simply denies the self-view. It denies separation, it denies an observer, a thinker. It denies a perfect controller, an independent agent. This is what 'Self' means, otherwise why is it a 'Self'? An individual mindstream remains as an individual mindstream, but it is nothing related to a Self.

Hence it is important to understand liberation from the right understanding, otherwise one gets confused. There is the experience of non-duality, Anatta, 'Tada' (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/04/tada.html), Stainlessness (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/04/stainlessness.html), but these have nothing to do with Self. Hence if one wants to understand Presence, then one must clearly and correctly understand Presence.

It is important to refine the understanding of Presence through the four aspects: impersonality, degree of luminosity, dissolving the need to reconfirm and understanding why it is unnecessary, and effortlessness.

These have no extrapolation and are what I am experiencing currently, and these requires improvement so that one can progress from "I AM".

There is the experience of impersonality. It is the stripping off of the personality aspect, and it causes one to link to a higher force, as if a cosmic life is functioning within me, like what Casino_King (a forummer who posted many years ago in both the Christian and Buddhist forums) experienced and described - the impersonal life force, which he called Holy Spirit.

It is as if it is all the functioning of a higher power, that life is itself taking the functioning, so dissolving 'personality' somehow allows me to get 'connected'.

I agreed with John and told him that just yesterday I remembered a Christian quote that is very apt in describing this aspect: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."- Galatians 2:20

John agrees and told me that it is about surrendering to this greater power, that it is not you, but the life in you that is doing the work. It is the key of getting 'connected' to a higher power, to a divine life, to a sacred power - and one wants to lose oneself for this divinity to work through us. And this is what John meant by John Tan/Thusness Stage 3 experience, the 'I' is the block, because of 'holding' one is unable to 'surrender' completely. When one completely surrenders, the divine will will become your 'will'.

This is not the non-dual sort of experience, nor is it about I AM or the Certainty of Being, nor is it about Anatta.

For example, "I AM" allows you to directly experience 'your' very own existence, the beingness, the innermost essence of 'You'.

A true and genuine practitioner must give rise to all these insights, and understand the causes and conditions that give rise to the experiences and not get mixed up. Many people get mixed up over different 'types' of 'no self'.

For example, no-self of non-dual, no-self of anatta, non-inherent existence and impersonality, are all not referring to the same experience - but rather they are different results of dissolving certain aspect of the tendencies.

Hence a practitioner must be sincere in his practice to clearly see, and not pretend that one knows. Otherwise practice is simply more mix-up, confusion, and nonsense. It is not that it cannot be known, it is just that the mind isn't clear enough to see the causes and conditions of arising." - Soh

krodha (Kyle Dixon)
· 13h

From page 118 of the book 'Inborn Realization' by Khenpo Tsewang Dongyal "There is not and will never be a single mind that is shared by everyone—there will always be limitless individual minds. Everyone, whether enlightened or not, has his or her own mind. Each individual mind can and does reflect everything and everybody. For these reasons, the teachings say that everyone is the sovereign ruler of his or her universe."

Very nice.

This seems to bother some people, but if they understood that removing the two obscurations unbinds the mind and exhausts the bifurcation into an inner subjective experience versus an outer external world, and everything is then experienced as one's own immaculate self-display, then perhaps they would not object to multiple conventional mindstreams.

It seems this issue always boils down to people struggling with how convention is understood and applied.

- No Universal Mind

□ Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Luminosity is not an intrinsic characteristic of things because there are no inherent or intrinsic characteristics or natures. Wetness is not the intrinsic nature of water, heat is not the intrinsic nature of fire. They are just names for the same thing. Therefore luminosity cannot be abstracted to be the nature or intrinsic characteristic of appearance, it's just describing appearance are luminous. That's all.
As I explained recently,
"Soh Wei YuAdmin
A key takeaway from the above:
Wetness and Water
https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=40&t=28648&start=20
Malcolm:

What do you mean by "nature?" Most people mean something that is intrinsic to a given thing. For example, common people assume the nature of fire is heat, the nature of water is wetness, and so on.
Bhavaviveka, etc., do not accept that things have natures. If they did, they could not be included even in Mahāyāna, let alone Madhyamaka.
...
The idea that things have natures is refuted by Nāgārjuna in the MMK, etc., Bhavaviveka, Candrakīrti, etc., in short by all Madhyamakas.
A "non-inherent nature" is a contradiction in terms.
The error of mundane, conventionally-valid perception is to believe that entities have natures, when in fact they do not, being phenomena that arise from conditions. It is quite easy to show a worldly person the contradiction in their thinking. Wetness and water are not two different things; therefore wetness is not the nature of water. Heat and fire are not two different things, therefore, heat is not the nature of fire, etc. For example, one can ask them, "Does wetness depend on water, or water on wetness?" If they claim wetness depends on water, ask them, where is there water that exists without wetness? If they claim the opposite, that water depends on wetness, ask them, where is there wetness that exists without water? If there is no wetness without water nor water without wetness, they can easily be shown that wetness is not a nature of water, but merely a name for the same entity under discussion. Thus, the assertion that wetness is the nature of water cannot survive analysis. The assertion of all other natures can be eliminated in the same way.
...
Then not only are you ignorant of the English language, but you are ignorant of Candrakīrti where, in the Prasannapāda, he states that the only nature is the natureless nature, emptiness.
Then, if it is asked what is this dharmatā of phenomena, it is the essence of phenomena. If it is ask what is an essence, it is a nature [or an inherent existence, rang bzhin]. If it is asked what is an inherent existence [or nature], it is emptiness. If it is asked what is emptiness, it is naturelessness [or absence of inherent existence]. If it is asked what is the absence of inherent existence [or naturelessness], it is suchness [tathāta]. If it is asked what is suchness, it is the essence of suchness that is unchanging and permanent, that is, because it is not fabricated it does not arise in all aspects and because it is not dependent, it is called the nature [or inherent existence] of fire, etc."
Labels: Ācārya Malcolm Smith, Emptiness, Madhyamaka |
Mipham: Gelug = Svatantrika Madhyamaka - Page 2 - Dharma Wheel
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Soh Wei YuAdmin

Therefore one should not reify consciousness into an entity, or a universal cosmic entity or ultimate Self, but rather see that it cannot be abstracted out from moment to moment manifestation. Any more than you can abstract 'heat' from 'fire' and turn it into some universal all powerful 'The Universal Heatness of all fires' and then imagine that the universal heatness exists eternally behind each individual fires and could transform or transfer from one fire into another and so on.. are all just abstract imagination based on a delusional paradigm of 'inherent existence' and duality. Any abstraction is the lack of clear insight, a form of delusion in action..
Heat and fire, water and wetness are just names for the instantiation... same for lightning and flash, river and flow, wind and blowing... etc
Consciousness is that instant of manifestation and is inseparable from conditions.
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../bodhidharma-on...
.... " · 11m□ Soh Wei Yu
Admin
I just found out Kyle wrote 3 days ago:
https://www.reddit.com/user/krodha/comments/
krodha
1 point ·
3 days ago
· edited 3 days ago
These are describing the dharmadhātu and tathāgatagarbha as generic characteristics [samanyalakṣana] meaning they are a similar quality found in discrete instances.
A true universal or monistic view on the other hand is a claim for the validity of a specific characteristic [svalakṣana], stating the ultimate is a specific characteristic of relative entities that all share that characteristic.
Buddhadharma allows for universal generic characteristics, but not universal specific characteristics. The former is referring to a common quality, like the heat of fire, or the wetness of water, these qualities are “universal” in that wherever you find water it bears the quality of being wet, likewise wherever there is a flame there is heat. The quality is the same in every discrete instance, but it is not a shared quality in that wetness is a singular entity that is transpersonal to each instance.
A specific characteristic as a universal on the other hand would be akin to asserting that all instances of water share the same single field of wetness that encompasses them all. Or all fire bears heat that is a singular field of heat that permeates all instances of fire.
Which is to say gzhan stong and tathāgatagarbha are ways of discussing the dharmatā of one’s own mind, and not some universal nature. This is why the excerpt you cited rightly differentiates tathāgatagarbha and the tirthika ātman.

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Edited

~ Potential Sleep Disruptions

(Also see chapter: **Tips on Energy Imbalances**)

Thusness, 2007:

"Hi JonLS,

There is Presence but do not attempt to sustain the 'Witnessing', this is attempting to hold on to a "familiar state of being when the conditions of senses are functioning". Allow to be and completely let go. For what is "What Is" when the senses are suspended and perceptions, conceRpts and feelings come to a complete rest? Be Non-dual in dreamless, be non-dual in all 3 states and the energy you experienced will dance vibrantly with bliss to tell that you are on the right path during waking state."

Sleep disruptions can occur after I AM, or even one mind. This was not a major issue for Soh (it surfaced only to a minor degree), but some people like John Tan and others faced it. One should relax and let go rather than focus on sustaining presence or a state of witnessing into sleep. Natural non-dual or clear light sleep does manifest in sleep naturally after anatta is stabilized, but it is different from the contrived state of effortful sustaining of dualistic witnessing presence which can cause sleep disruptions and insomnia, and one should definitely not mistaken the grasping at a sense of wakefulness (which is actually a form of insomnia and sleep disruption) as a form of achievement.

If one gets stuck with insomnia after I AM/Eternal Witness, it can only be truly solved after realizing John Tan Stage 5. And with regards to the 'Witness', John Tan wrote before in 2008, "There is no problem being the witness, the problem is only wrong understanding of what witness is. That is [under the influence of ignorance, one is] seeing duality in Witnessing, or seeing 'Self' and other, subject-object division. That is the problem. You can call it Witnessing or Awareness, there must be no sense of self."

I have seen so many famous masters and practitioners who have completely mistaken that remaining conscious into deep sleep is a form of achievement. Many masters in various traditions, such as Advaita, Tibetan, Zen, Thai Forest and so on may see being conscious in sleep as an ultimate achievement, the prized 'Turiya' (fourth state) transcending and underlying the transient states of waking, dreaming and sleep. In actuality, not being able to fall asleep completely and being always conscious even when sleeping (what Ramana calls sleepless sleep, wakeful sleep) is an energy imbalance, and it is harmful to one's health. As John Tan warned, "You realize everyone that claims this ended up having serious

health issues.'", "just don't mistaken all these energy imbalances as achievement. Look at all these issues directly and know how to deal with it."

According to John Tan, to prevent energy imbalances in I AM phase, non-doership and calmness it extremely key. There must be a balance.

In 2007, John Tan translated a paragraph from English to Chinese. It was a passage he wrote about I AMness as the changeless ground of being, ending it with an additional comment, "Due to the strong karmic propensities to grasp at a substance of awareness, the practitioner may have difficulties falling asleep, and in serious cases may obtain insomnia, being unable to fall asleep for many years." He wrote that and told me to send it along with the Thusness (John Tan) Stages of Enlightenment to a dharma teacher as that dharma teacher was suffering from insomnia due to energy imbalance after I AMness. To truly solve this issue, one must be able to relinquish one's grasping at Awareness (reified as a Self) and give rise to John Tan Stage 5 insight of anatta.

"Once a practitioner deeply experiences the illusoriness of "self/self-image", the illusory "self-image" dissolves like a river merges into the great ocean, dissolving without a trace. This moment is also the arising of the Great Self. This Great Self is pure, mystically alive, clear and bright, just like an empty space-mirror reflecting the ten thousand things. The coming and going, birth and death, rise and fall, the ten thousand events and ten thousand phenomena simply arise and cease according to conditions as illusory manifestations appearing from within the ground-substratum of the Great Self. The ground-substratum never gets affected, is still and without movement, without coming and without going. This Great Self is the Atman-Brahman, God-Self.
Commentary: Practitioners should not mistaken this as the True Buddha Mind! Due to the karmic force of grasping at a substance of awareness, a practitioner may have difficulty entering sleep, and in serious cases may experience insomnia, the inability to fall asleep for many years." – John Tan, 2007

"As long as she knows where she is and aim for stage 5.5, she will be able to cure her sleeping problem. :)" - John Tan, 2007

"(11:46 PM) Thusness: X has not experienced non dual. that is why there is a sleeping problem. :P and she must take it as a misunderstanding of consciousness. this latent sleeping problem can only be solved by stage 5 and 6. this also means that she has not experienced wu wei fa also. contrary to what she wrote. but not to talk about stage. She misunderstood it as I AMness and 4th stage. when [one is] at [stage] 5.5, her problem will be solved. her yuan [conditions] must be there. :) anyway not to belittle her. :) just that there is a problem of sleeplessness. it is good to tell her when the yuan is there. and the lacking [point] in the teaching must be patched. :)" - John Tan, 2007

Regarding maintaining awareness into sleep, John Tan said today (29/05/2022), "This one will affect health a lot and cause intense energy imbalance if did not practice properly. Not suitable for lay person that has work imo. You also need to have exercises to keep your qi circulating."
Ben Miles

That is interesting. Did John mention his reasons for saying this? I know a couple of people that do regular lucid dream yoga / maintaining awareness into sleep and have only reported positive benefits.
Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Ben Miles From personal experience. There is a sub chapter on "possible sleep disruptions" in the first stage chapter in the AtR guide: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/06/the-awakening-to-reality-practice-guide.html
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□ Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
John Tan suffered insomnia and energy imbalances for a decade. Only anatta solved his problem
□ □ □ □ □ □ Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Ben Miles
Also, afaik Dzogchen teacher Malcolm didnt teach like that. I'm not sure about other teachers.
[29/5/22, 11:16:28 PM] John Tan: What Malcolm meant is not this [remaining conscious in sleep], what he meant is before sleep remain in that state of anatta and visualize the letter A and then sleep and deep sleep till you wake up. If dreams of clarity arises, practice naturally. Not remain like 似睡非睡。
[29/5/22, 11:16:38 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[29/5/22, 11:17:22 PM] John Tan: only when elements are imbalance you dream.
[29/5/22, 11:17:48 PM] Soh Wei Yu: ic..
[29/5/22, 11:20:31 PM] John Tan: Unless you are already mature this then the practice can turn naturally into 3 states but it will be like what Malcolm meant and should not be practiced like what ur grand master said, 似睡非睡. Try not to practice that way, maybe monk like ur grand master can."

John Tan speaks from experience because the insomnia he experienced for over a decade after energy imbalance induced after I AMness was only resolved after anatta. Realization of anatta was crucial to that resolution, hence the comment 'when [one is] at [stage] 5.5, her problem will be solved'.

"(10:09 PM) John: yes it is still if we want to call it, the 'Self' but when emptiness comes into picture...Presence takes another role... look at buddhism closely...there is no need for emptiness and non-inherent existence if it is merely 'Self'. it is all about the clarity of our true nature. if we call our true nature the true 'Self', it is alright...but what is the relationship of emptiness? it is more like God. that does not require conditions, just the source will do. :) "I AMness" lead to that sort of presence....anatta even worse...greater clarity. kundalini awakening the serpent also will lead to this cosmic consciousness experience, but the emptiness nature isn't seen.

(10:14 PM) AEN: kundalini awakening how come also can
(10:14 PM) AEN: isnt it some kind of chakra thing?
(10:14 PM) John: because of the release of energy that cause a sudden drop out of all barriers
(10:14 PM) AEN: btw j krishnamurti attain enlightenment through kundalini i tink.. he mention
(10:15 PM) John: yes...every chakra is a release and melting away, and the release till a free and pure sense of energetic sense of awareness. union with cosmic consciousness, so called. the presence can be so intense that you don't know how to deal with it. :) it penetrate to the sleeping phase" – Conversation with John Tan, 2006

"To find one that can completely surrender and totally be is extremely rare. Not even one in millions. Yet in deep sleep, all has to let go. How can one be denied such a precious state of beingness.

For a person that has experienced no-self (non-duality), deep sleep is even more important. It is the completion of a full cycle of non-duality and natural beingness.

But this may not be the case for one that clings to the "Eternal Witnessing". There is a very subtle holding in them for maintaining this witnessing subconsciously thereby denying them from naturally going into deep sleep. If it reaches a point that presents itself as a problem, it is a signal to the practitioner that it is time to let go and dissolve the holding of the Witness, the center. It will be tough to simply try just "let go" of the center and if this is the case, an insight into our "emptiness nature" may help.

Only after going through a full cycle of natural non-duality and beingness in all three states (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) will a practitioner sleep be shortened. I called this the second cycle of non-duality." - John Tan, 2007

"There is no need to maintain anything during deep sleep. It is non-dual by itself. More pure than anything. :)" - John Tan, 2007

"The deep dreamless sleep is a very precious state of being, a natural samadhi of its own, a measure of accomplishment in the first complete cycle of non-dual. If conditions are understood along with our pristine nature, all 3 states flow as a single whole." - John Tan, 2007

"JonLS:

Because we're too busy identifying with thoughts and feelings in the mind and body.

John Tan:

And also busy identifying with the "I Am". The worry has now come to it. Dissolve and passaway, fade out of existence! So be it!

quote:

_____

Why can't we fully appreciate our perfection?

_____

John Tan :

Fade away and appreciate "no where". Sleep well!" - Jan 2007

- □
  - ○

□ Aditya Prasad
If it makes you feel any better, I've been stuck in "I AM" for over three decades 😆. After reading (parts of) AtR, I recognized another major trap I fell into: trying to continually reconfirm awareness. It's deeply habitual now, and triggers itself when I'm trying to fall asleep, preventing me from getting restful sleep. Really grateful for this group, because even though it's taking a long time to work through this stuff, I don't know of any other resource that explains it.

3 · 11h

- ·

Tony Taylor
Author
Aditya Prasad Yea I'm 44 so 3 decades for me as well 😀
□ · 10h
□ Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Aditya Prasad Due to lack of insight into the nature of awareness, the mind always has the sense that awareness is behind, an unexamined belief that "awareness is not thought, is not sleep, is not this and that experience" and that "awareness is what is BEHIND them", so it always attempts to jump out of that moment of experience to find this 'familiar background' which is a mind made illusion. It is really just a line, a definition, a mind made map that attempts to locate awareness as 'not that but this', 'not there but here', etc.
When insight into nature of awareness arise, then one is able to overcome the tendency of locating awareness anywhere besides manifestation. Then you will love to just sleep when you sleep, in hearing just sound, in sleeping just sleep, because that's always what's already the case -- never a seer or a seeing besides.

After that 'confirmation' is always auto confirmation by the ten thousand things and auto release (self liberation) upon arising, in fact non arising in its arising. There is absolutely no effort to reconfirm anything necessary what has no who, no where, no when, non local but ever brilliant and spontaneous, without center, division, location or boundaries, all vivid manifestations as spontaneous presence.

Joel Agee, 2013:

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../joel-agee...

Here are two sentences from one of the oldest Dzogchen texts, The All-Creating Monarch (Kunjed Gyalpo) quoted in Longchenpa's Precious Treasury of the Way of Abiding (Richard Barron's translation):

“Seek the location of the heart essence through phenomena that derive from it
and come to appreciate it through the skillful means of not conceptualizing in any way whatsoever.
Since the heart essence occurs naturally, dharmakaya is not elsewhere.”

Coming across these lines had a vividly awakening effect on me.

Like · · Unfollow Post · September 2, 2012 at 1:29pm

Dannon Flynn, Steven Monaco, Neony Karby and 6 others like this.

Joel Agee Simple but profound and ongoing: a deconstruction of an unconscious habit of locating awareness anywhere else than in the moment-to-moment transient phenomena. Whoosh! No observer, no witness. No location!

David Vardy No location but 'here' in the heart....

September 2, 2012 at 1:46pm via mobile · Like · 2

Chris Collins You're finding a deepening clarity in transcient phenomena ? Can you explain any more ?

September 2, 2012 at 1:48pm via mobile · Like

Joel Agee David: Yes, definitely. And your putting "here" in quotes feels accurate, because that too is unfindable.

September 2, 2012 at 1:50pm · Like · 2

Joel Agee Chris, I'm not sure I can explain exactly. There's a frequent and delightful experience of being "confirmed" by sounds and sights, especially sounds. Greater appreciation of what shows up from moment to moment, a kind of energy of being available for anything. More spontaneous ease in action and speech and thought. But in a way this is all secondary. The recognition of awareness is unobstructed. Sometimes it seems to be obscured by thoughts and feelings, and then it's obvious that those too are the clarity and the emptiness. RIght now there's joy in seeing and saying this.

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM

Joel Agee: Appearances are Self-Illuminating

Joel Agee: Appearances are Self-Illuminating

· 21m

- · □ Soh Wei Yu

Admin

So during my I AM phase I too experience that insomnia thing though to a much lesser degree than John Tan and many others, I remember this constant witnessing into sleep and the tendency to snap out of thoughts back into a constant background and this often wakes me up and disrupts my sleep (both when falling asleep and when asleep). But I will just drop all that and just sleep as much as I can and continue to progress in the 4 aspects and nondual contemplations and bahiya sutta.

· 12m

□ Soh Wei Yu

Admin

John Tan wrote in May 2007, "Many love Presence, the background, the reality behind all appearances. If we can dedicate the same love towards appearances and to thoughts, I think that will do; for they are one and the same. Forget about self or no-self if it is confusing. My 2 cents. "

The same goes for sleep too, I might add.

He also said back then,

"A person in utter sincerity will realize that whenever he attempts to step out of Isness (although he can't), there is complete confusion. In truth, he cannot know anything in reality.

If we haven't had enough confusion and fear, Isness will not be fully appreciated.

"I am not thoughts, I am not feelings, I am not forms, I am not all these, I am the Ultimate Eternal Witness." is the ultimate identification.

The transients that we shunt away are the very Presence we are seeking; it is a matter of living in Beingness or living in constant identification. Beingness flows and identification stays. Identification is any attempt to return to Oneness without knowing its nature is already non-dual.

"I AM" is not knowing. I AM is Being. Being thoughts, Being feelings, Being Forms...There is no separate I from start. Either there is no you or you are all."

"When we clung too deeply to the luminous presence, to that 'pure sense of existence', we fail to see the emptiness nature of that presence. Phenomena dances in and out of existence, arises and subsides according to conditions. When a practitioner does not 'posit' an 'I' and 'see' that there is really no one behind, then popping in and out of existence is not seen as any thing unusual, still the perfect expression of our pristine nature that is empty. Allow Presence to be, no who, no when and no where."- Jan 2007

"Yes Longchen,

Very well said. There never was a gap, it can't be. It is one whole flow and nothing else. When there is one, there is two. When the one subsides, nothing isn't the one Reality.

Clear transparency of the One Reality also has its problem. An illumination into the non-duality without certain pre-requisite can cause problems. There is always habitual propensities that will again make this experience an object of attachment. It can cause a person to go without sleep as the body is incapable of dealing with this newfound experience. Many have mistaken this to be a heightening of awareness and took it as a natural progression. This is not true. Whenever

this happens, know that it is due to attachment. Learn how to let go of everything until a tranquil calmness arise, it has got to do with our thought patterns, there must come this willingness to let go of our body completely, then our thoughts and the experience of presence... completely letting go from moment to moment... the senses and thoughts can be shut by this art of letting go and non-attachment. Total letting go and vivid Presence must fuse into one.

Practice during the waking state till there is no single trace of doubt that there is absolutely no one there, no inner and no outer, just the incredible realness and vividness of the manifestation. The experience of non-dual in the waking state. Witnessing dreams and there is no witness, just dreams is different. Dealing with the more subtle states and pre-conscious propensities require one to master this art of non-attachment, non-action. There is no conscious way of dealing with the more subtle states, just stabilized the experience and allow the momentum to carry us naturally into the dream and deep sleep. Sleep well. :)" - John Tan, 2006

"You don't need clarity [during sleep] like in conscious state. You only need the strength of insight to penetrate the 3 states (Soh: waking, dreaming, deep sleep)." - John Tan, 2019

"Focus on wisdom and letting the strength of insights penetrate the 3 states (Soh: waking, dreaming, deep sleep)." - John Tan, 2019

By wisdom, John Tan refers to the insight of anatta, dependent origination and emptiness (as in John Tan Stage 5 and 6).

Soh wrote during his I AM phase:

"9th July 2010
The sense of presence is so strong yesterday that I had difficulty sleeping until I relax my focus on it, and even then, I kept waking up and finding myself in utter clarity.
Funny I just found a conversation from 2006:
John: I am trying to prevent you from undergoing such suffering.
Soh: of insomnia?
John: :)
Soh: but how would I suffer from insomnia. I sleep very well and deeply, lol
John: later stage, not now.

.....

Posted in Kenneth Folk Dharma:

I hope this wouldn't be too much off topic. Do you mean you have trouble sleeping? Yesterday night, perhaps due to having just sat in meditation right before sleep, the 2nd gear Witness is very strong and I had difficulty sleeping (prior to

having access to 2nd gear, I usually fall asleep in one minute, but if I am in 2nd gear mode, that can take up to an hour). It happens sometimes, I notice, usually if I have been practicing/meditating just prior to sleep.

Any thought that being 'followed' might have led to a dream state... is in the 2nd Gear mode simply seen to be an illusion occuring in a bright, undeniable and unavoidable background of Awareness. As such those 'dream thoughts' just pop in and out of Awareness without a thread of continuity. The effortless sense of Presence is so strong that I had to relax my focus on the Witness to fall asleep.

However, I still kept waking up soon after I fall asleep, and when I wake up I am in a state of full clarity almost immediately or immediately. After repeated attempts at relaxing the focus I was able to sleep soundly until the next morning.

Sometimes the Witness mode persists in dreams, sometimes not. .....

John told me (regards to my 'insomnia' yesterday):
You need non-dual to solve the problem. Now relax for some time... don't over do. You must learn how to feel and experience vividly all arising as if the 'I' never existed. This is a relaxed form of practice... it means your practice should now focus on the foreground and not the background. Lose yourself completely now into manifestation... the raw manifestation... not the content of it." - Soh, June 2010 e-journal entry, after his I AM realization

"John: That is not the way... because he cannot cope with his experience of consciousness, unable to let go of that experience that created this illusion... it is no good for his health and X too...

Soh: Oh, I see. But X says she is very awake, lol

John: Yeah.... I am too... but she must dare to die. totally subsides. nothing at all. it is a problem. she must not misunderstand. The Presence experience requires one to know how to feel the great death then one can understand emptiness. and the subsiding of presence in deep sleep is important because it revitalizes. it is not that nothing is known. it is just it is another form of manifestation. when one say that someone drinks in new york, the one in Singapore get drunk. it is non local... not letting one completely dissolved, one will not experience that. and the understanding is always centered. I told you that I have gone through 10 years of insomnia right?

Soh: yea, you said it's due to some Qi practise? that gone wrong. lol

John: I do not treat that as a stage, I treat that as a problem. I am totally clear throughout, extremely clear. when one enters into meditative stage of presence in dream state. it is not lucid dreaming. it is presence and merging into symbols. like experiencing the sky as you, all those symbols are you. when you meditate for long hours and is able to rest our mind at night, though even sitting. there will come a time that all sorts of symbols appear. children playing. birds flying in the sky. you see faces so clear yet you are aware and sometimes you wonder whether are your eyes open or closed. you are

awaring the dreams taking place. but still the same, there is no one awaring but the presence of the dreams. it is not like those described *(Soh: descriptions of either lucid dreaming or Witnessing presence in sleep)*. totally out. see oceans....like flying over the oceans....images taking places. yet there is awareness.... this is due to the manifestation of conditions. but it is non physical but purely symbolics. there is not much differences though. then the symbols will come to an end. the dreams will, there is no story line, just images after images. Random... but quite clear. but it will come to an end.... then all images subsides... completely nothing

Soh: I see. then you wake up ?

John: nope... dreamless. then dunno how long....those symbols arises again. your mind is completely clear. it is difficult to tell you. :) one can be so attached to these stages that it is so difficult to get out. the only medicine is no-self and emptiness. I think only emptiness can save. Lol. that is completely dissolve even the Presence. Then the Presence does not have to localize.

Soh: emptiness will dissolve Presence?

John: and we will progress. you see, the awareness in all these stages is still a form of centricity. it is a subtle background. awareness is difficult to understand. :) in fact we can't understand. that is the problem. we can only experience. but most people want to make sense out of this experience therefore they conceptualized. and even with the experience, they subtly fall back to this very fine concept and identify with it instead of just letting the conditions unfold, just it. the unfolding is already it. the entire body become so focused and concentrated... it uses up so much energy that the body and brain already [becomes] numb... one does not realise it. do you know what every practices must have the melting effect?

Soh: you mean releasing bonds? wat you mean melting

John: when you focus chakra... when you visualize, these sort of practices must have the melting effect to dissolve into complete nothings... letting everything unfold... you must later learn how to engage yourself into activities and practice from there. completely engaged. it is especially important after the experience of anatta. after the practice of mindfulness, engage into activities. just know the DO (dependent origination) and emptiness, hold on to nothing. there is no need to hold on to presence

Soh: but isn't it possible to maintain 'presence' in every moment in life ?

John: if you think there is a need, use no-self and emptiness, then the Presence will speak in its stillness. it is possible. that is due to wisdom. the loosening of the bond. not as a result of effort. means when your attachment loosen, your capacity to 'see' is naturally there. the 'seeing' is the experiencing is the presence" - 2006 Conversation with John Tan

"It is not necessary to maintain witnessing at all. A wrong understanding. After non-dual and with right understanding,

only manifestation with right condition is necessary. It's holding on to 'witnessing' that is denying the further experience of our pristine nature. :)" - John Tan, 2007

"(1:52 PM) Thusness: don't become zoombie that's all. :) Clarity manifest after unconsciousness at the right time. :) The holding back is a subtle attachment. You must die to get rebirth. :) Does deep sleep creates clarity. :) Maintaining witnessing is not observing the conditions of the body. :) that is not allowing conditions to be and manifest. :) "knowingness" is not holding on and not to get subsided. :P it is to "be" as "unconscious". :) It is a difficult state to describe. :) Not to take it as in the "conscious knowing". :)
(1:58 PM) AEN: I see.. By the way is it mindfulness would lead to mirror bright but not necessary non dual? I think you said something like that or I may be wrong
(1:59 PM) Thusness: yes. But it will if the intensity sharpen till it is able to realise that manifestation is. Now is nirodha samapatti "knowing"? Does a person know when in that state? It is just 'that' state. :) Nothing else.
(2:02 PM) AEN: oic.. but there is luminosity isn't it
(2:02 PM) Thusness: as in?
(2:02 PM) AEN: as in the luminous aspect our buddha nature
(2:03 PM) Thusness: ahahha.... you cannot understand because you still hold on to 'knowingness'. :)

(2:15 PM) Thusness: it is a lil deep for you now... :) Even for longchen (Sim Pern Chong) it is deep. But he is safe for now. :) I hope he takes my words seriously with the passing away. The second door. But I do not want you to get into what ken wilber described. :) That is the problem of X. :) With the condition of a body, manifest along with the condition of a body. Just like the 'eye' can only 'see' certain range, let it be. Not to strain the eyes for what it is not. :) But in each experience, discern with clarity the luminous presence.
(2:20 PM) AEN: I see.. By the way you mean if practise like ken wilber will lead to dark night? then ken wilber and X got dark night meh? *(Comments by Soh: referring to Ken Wilber's article about maintaining constant consciousness and being awake without sleep for over a week, which I only come to realise many years down the road after facing similar issues myself, is actually insomnia and energy imbalance in disguise of spiritual achievement in the name of 'Turiya')*
(2:26 PM) Thusness: yes.
(2:26 PM) AEN: huh.. not that I know haha
(2:27 PM) Thusness: because you don't know. :P
(2:27 PM) AEN: then X got dark night? how will it be like
(2:27 PM) Thusness: err... you never see ken wilber so siong. :P
(2:27 PM) AEN: how
(2:28 PM) Thusness: No worries. No need to think too much.

(5:30 PM) Thusness: guessed a bit of cautioning is necessary. :)

(5:31 PM) Thusness: yes. :) Not the witnessing as said by Ken Wilber. That is not necessary and misleading. The misconception, attachment and fear resist the dissolution. Not to be misled. :)

(5:33 PM) Thusness: i have said many times it is not and posted and told you the importance of sleep. It is like a kind of samadhi. :) Always measure by clarity, vividness and radiance. When you sleep well and completely dreamless, don't you feel these 3 factors are clear and strong?

(5:35 PM) AEN: you mean you can??
(5:35 PM) Thusness: i think we spoke on maintaining witnessing during sleep before in another post. I said don't go into it.

(5:39 PM) Thusness: lol. Non dual has no separation. Sometimes when I typed too fast and combine 2 sentences into one. :P But I think I said not to do that and maintain witnessing in one of the post you asked. Non duality has no-separation, it is that state as it is. When it is in waking, it is the phenomena arising. The so called 'thing' itself.
(5:45 PM) AEN:

Yes Longchen,

Very well said. There never was a gap, it can't be. It is one whole flow and nothing else. When there is one, there is two. When the one subsides, nothing isn't the one Reality.

Clear transparency of the One Reality also has its problem. An illumination into the non-duality without certain pre-requisite can cause problems. There is always habitual propensities that will again make this experience an object of attachment. It can cause a person to go without sleep as the body is incapable of dealing with this newfound experience. Many have mistaken this to be a heightening of awareness and took it as a natural progression. This is not true. Whenever this happens, know that it is due to attachment. Learn how to let go of everything until a tranquil calmness arise, it has got to do with our thought patterns, there must come this willingness to let go of our body completely, then our thoughts and the experience of presence...completely letting go from moment to moment...the senses and thoughts can be shut by this art of letting go and non-attachment. Total letting go and
(5:46 PM) AEN: Total letting go and vivid Presence must fuse into one.

Practice during the waking state till the there is no single trace of doubt that there is absolutely no one there, no inner and no outer, just the incredible realness and vividness of the manifestation. The experience of non-dual in the waking state. Witnessing dreams and there is no witness, just dreams is different. Dealing with the more subtle states and pre-conscious propensities require one to master this art of non-attachment, non-action. There is no conscious way of dealing with the more subtle states, just stabilized the experience and allow the momentum to carry us naturally into the dream and deep sleep. Sleep well. :)
(5:47 PM) Thusness: yes. very clear what :P
(5:48 PM) Thusness: That is precisely what I meant. 'Be' Dreamless. The cognitive mind cannot know. There is no conscious way of dealing with the more subtle states, just stabilize the experience and allow the momentum to carry us naturally into the dream and deep sleep. No-conscious way... don't maintain that 'witnessing'. The conscious mind will only come to know about it when the 7 factors of enlightenment is enhanced during waking state. That is the problem

faced by X also. The 'jue' (awareness) went deep into her. Being subtly attached to the 'Witnessing', she is unable to 'be' when the conditions of sleep manifest.

(5:58 PM) Thusness: still not good enough. See now she understand there is no mirror at all. She somehow know the problem but isn't clear.

(6:01 PM) Thusness: yes. But there is experience of Presence. A mirror but not attached to the reflection, to there is no mirror! Only manifestation alone is. Completely break that mirror. Then that is non-dual. The conditions are there for X if she wrote what you said. If she has the 'yuan' (conditions) she will understand. Give her the English version will be better and let her decode herself instead. :P or let her write the next article. "There is no-mirror".... hahaha

(8:25 PM) Thusness: "Mindfulness is participatory observation. The meditator is both participant and observer at one and the same time. If one watches one's emotions or physical sensations, one is feeling them at that very same moment. Mindfulness is not an intellectual awareness. It is just awareness. The mirror-thought metaphor breaks down here. Mindfulness is objective, but it is not cold or unfeeling.
(8:25 PM) Thusness: It is the wakeful experience of life, an alert participation in the ongoing process of living. " - *An excerpt from Mindfulness in Plain English by Venerable Henepola Gunaratana, https://www.budsas.org/ebud/ebmed005.htm*
(8:25 PM) Thusness: This is very good. But there is still trace of duality. It is very difficult to go beyond it and say phenomena is it. Therefore what that is taught and proclaimed in Lankavatara Sutra is often not realised. It is very difficult for one to experience the transparency I am talking about. Once experienced, all will be very clear. Perhaps the only one that can break through is longchen [Sim Pern Chong]. This is if he can non-dual in all three states *(waking, dreaming, deep sleep)* and let be. Then at the waking state, the presence can be so powerful that there is no boundary at all. The body is a total non-obstruction and the Presence stands out as if consciousness is out of the body and phenomena alone is. The body thing requires one to experience non-dual and *be* in all three states. Then the waking state becomes powerfully charged with presence, vitality, clarity and radiance. If one can sustain this continuously then "transparency body" is attained. :) This is what I mean the transcendental body." - John Tan, 2007

"John: yes the description is the experience of I AM. hahaha..

Soh: because someone quoted this guy in e-sangha, and said he is wakeful even in sleep

John: almost all that is described points to it. But what you cut and paste doesn't sound like.

Soh: so I shared some of what you said regarding dangers of witnessing in sleep
I see. how come?

John: that is the usual case. however if one experiences non-dual, then this sort of 'wakefulness' is gone. wakefulness at night is gone. it is different from true mindfulness where one completely loses the sense of self...like buddha having 2hrs

sleep. that is different...don't anyhow anyhow mix the 2. the former is a form of [being] unable to handle the propensities and doesn't know what to do.
takes many many years to overcome. and she found it as a problem too. true mindfulness and alertness is different. and almost everyone that goes through 'I AMness' have sort of this problem.

(Comments by Soh: John suffered serious energy imbalances and insomnia for like a decade or more after his I AMness realization, and it was only solved after his realization of anatta. This is why he said 'this sort of 'wakefulness' is gone' - also see chapter on *Tips on Energy Imbalances*)

Soh: I see. You as well in the past?

John: this is usual. Yeah. if a person overcome it through insight and enter into non-duality (buddhist no-self), then there is overcoming because that propensity that cause the 'sleeplessness' and over conscious of the 'I AM' is gone. then come the stage of clarity which is different... and frankly, a person getting peak in experience of non-duality will not describe it like that and take 'wakefulness in sleep' as such a big deal. he correctly sees and have insight into the true nature. he will not emphasize this. he will tell you sleep instead! ahahaha
otherwise why you see all those zen masters stressed about simplicity and all great masters talk about that... non-dual is about this. :)

Soh: I see.. like the when sitting, just sit, when doing this, just do etc

John: when sleeping just sleep. one dissolves and the condition of arising is also realised as the source." - Conversation with John Tan, 2007

"(7:16 PM) John: anyway...sustain of presence of presence can be due to a natural momentum or a very subtle and strong attachment of the 'Self'.
(7:16 PM) AEN: sustain of presence of presence?
(7:16 PM) AEN: icic
(7:17 PM) John: that is, in dreamless state, it can be due to the unwillingness of letting as a result of subtle attachment. most likely the case. it is not natural momentum.
(7:17 PM) AEN: you have experienced tat in the past?
(7:17 PM) John: the letting go into deep sleep is very important and let it turns in naturally. even now.
(7:17 PM) AEN: huh
(7:18 PM) AEN: how come
(7:18 PM) John: it is not easy to differentiate....one has to be utterly truthful. but i have practice the letting go few years back.
(7:19 PM) AEN: icic...

(7:19 PM) John: and it helps me to see more clearly instead of being lured into the idea of thinking i have achieved great height of attainment. because of our mind is so clear, our sleep actually shorten to very few hours and to enter into deep sleep from that mental alertness isn't easy. we rather meditate. then we thought that is a natural state.
(7:20 PM) AEN: icic
(7:21 PM) John: i tried it about 1.5 yrs back and notice the difference.
(7:21 PM) AEN: tried wat
(7:21 PM) AEN: meditating ?
(7:21 PM) John: the body must be completely at rest...that is a pre-condition.
(7:21 PM) AEN: icic
(7:21 PM) John: for the body to be completely at rest, you must learn to let go completely... even to Presence...
(7:22 PM) AEN: but presence is a natural state rite?
(7:22 PM) John: but the letting go of the body is already a great achievement...the strength of calmness and letting go somehow let you overcome the attachment to Presence.
(7:23 PM) AEN: oic..
(7:23 PM) John: Presence has to be a natural state, it might not be a natural state.
(7:23 PM) AEN: huh?
(7:24 PM) John: the experience of true presence has to be as natural as possible, it is a reflection of our purity due to the loosening of our inner bond.
(7:24 PM) AEN: icic..
(7:25 PM) John: however for one that has experience presence, he is able to feel the Presence in and out like a deliberate attempt. This is because he is able to go beyond thoughts and concepts. but the attachment is still working behind him.
(7:25 PM) AEN: oic..
(7:25 PM) John: it depends what energy is stronger. so we must practice letting go through correct understanding of impermanence and emptiness. it is not easy to let go...the mind will tend to identify and the identification will make us cling. the state of Presence can become an object of experience for a practitioner to cling
(7:27 PM) AEN: icic..
(7:27 PM) John: and that becomes a problem.
(7:27 PM) AEN: oic
(7:27 PM) John: you must start practicing...to refine your understanding.
(7:27 PM) AEN: but clinging and identification to any states will prevent one from experience presence isnt it?
(7:27 PM) AEN: ok
(7:28 PM) John: yes but because Presence pops in and out, it is difficult to notice. meaning it use to be thoughts. but now it is presence. there is nothing wrong with the experience of presence, but it is the attachment. it is the subtle attachment that prevent us from deep sleep because we are unwilling to let go of that experience. though one will not feel anything wrong or it does not disturb one much, it is not a form of achievement as described. it is a retrogression instead. when one is able to let go and let everything subsides even the loss of consciousness, it is a more profound state instead. it has to be a natural momentum that is being built up.

(7:31 PM) AEN: icic
(7:32 PM) AEN: is there presence in nirvana?
(7:32 PM) John: until the propensities is gone, the letting go is complete, it is illuminated everywhere. total presence is nirvana...at least to me. to me there is no further. if the letting go is thorough. then the Presence is complete. there is a great diff between subtle attachment that we unwillingly go into sleep and letting the conditions take place without self, just empty phenomenon takes it own course." – John Tan, 2006

Buddha on Sleep, translation by Bhikkhu Bodhi: *Saṃyutta Nikāya 4*

Connected Discourses with Mara

7. Sleep

On one occasion the Blessed One was dwelling at Rajagaha in the Bamboo Grove, the Squirrel Sanctuary. Then, when the night was fading, the Blessed One, having spent much of the night walking back and forth in the open, washed his feet, entered his dwelling, and lay down on his right side in the lion's posture, with one leg overlapping the other, mindful and clearly comprehending, having attended to the idea of rising.

Then Mara the Evil One approached the Blessed One and addressed him in verse:

"What, you sleep? Why do you sleep?
What's this, you sleep like a wretch?
Thinking 'The hut's empty' you sleep:
What's this, you sleep when the sun has risen?"

The Blessed One:

"Within him craving no longer lurks,
Entangling and binding, to lead him anywhere;
With the destruction of all acquisitions
The Awakened One sleeps:
Why should this concern you, Mara?"

Then Mara the Evil One ... disappeared right there.

- *https://suttacentral.net/sn4.7/en/bodhi*

When hungry, eat;
Tired, sleep.
Fools laugh at me,
But the wise know its wisdom.

- Ch'an/Zen Master Linji Xiyuan

"John: when the self subsides yet just the sound alone...what is it... when there is just the scenery, what is it? without self. then talk about deep sleep... what is non-dual in deep sleep. otherwise it is still dualistic mode of knowing. but it is not the time to tell him yet. :)

Soh: but anyway non dual in conscious is like 'being' the sound right. so deep sleep..

John: yeah

Soh: 'being' nothing?

John: you can't know... don't explore

Soh: so it's like 'being nothing', right?

John: the problem with people is that there is no point knowing because there is no way to know for now. first understand and practice. because whatever said is wrong knowledge

John: if you don't even understand what is non dual in waking, how can you keep thinking what is non dual in deep sleep."

To emphasize the point, sustaining witnessing presence as in the I AM phase is not the same as non-dual, be it in waking or sleep. For that is still dualistic (a witness that is merely witnessing phenomena from behind - a subject/object, perceiver/perceived duality) and holding tightly onto a form of centricity and background witnessing can be disruptive to sleep, instead of just sleeping when it's time to sleep, dissolving and fusing with the conditions of sleep, so to speak. Hence, one should first realize non-dual anatta (at least John Tan/Thusness Stage 5) then let wisdom mature into sleep naturally.

As Sim Pern Chong wrote in 2007:
"Non-duality is NOT the same as a state of Witnessing Presence observing Phenomenality. An Eternal Witness Presence that is apart from Phenomena cannot be said to be non dual as there are 2 components here (witness and phenomena). I had this experience before. And now, I must say that true non-duality is distinctively different from this.

Non duality can only be effortlessly experienced when the 'sense of self' and the 'Eternal Witness' are correctly understood for what they are."

"Many sites I see are full of duality. Thorough non-duality or no-self experience is rare. It will be great if they can describe

what the waking state is like after non-dual is experienced in all three states *(waking, dreaming and deep sleep).*" - John Tan, 2007

"Issues of sleeplessness are usually more pertinent to those in the I AMness phases, but transient episodes of sleeplessness right after certain breakthroughs in anatta are also common, however they usually do not last more than a couple of days especially if one knows how to handle the energy imbalances involved, as there is no more clinging to an identity as 'conscious knowing' in anatta. Instead when sleeping one just fully sleeps and when eating one fully eats, etc." - Soh, 2019

"(1:42 AM) Thusness: you should sleep. don't worry about people saying you should practice in sleep. there is no practice if you cannot drop. there is no practice if you do not know what non-dual and emptiness is. so don't worry about dreams and deep sleep. during waking state, practice these then when you must sleep, go sleep. when you realised emptiness, your 'self' will be gone. you will love sleeping. :) you will love to be gone. :P" - Conversation with John Tan, 2008

2007: "Jane wrote:
There is no static witness behind our experiences.
No background.
The witness turns out to be everything that is witnessed.
Manifestation is the source the witness.
They are not separate.
Awareness is the words that form on the screen the sound of typing.
There is only moment to moment of flow of manifestation.
Non-duality is not a state it is not an experience.
It is the nature of reality of all states.
the entry to the gateless gate.
Form is emptiness and emptiness is form.

GrimNexus wrote:

Jane,
No.
The ONE INFINITE EXISTENCE/Awareness Itself does not "come from" the Manifestation

Thusness replied:

Hi Grim,

As much as I would not like to say, although you have experienced the fruition of 'seeing', you have not experienced the fruition of 'dropping the Self -- The ONE INFINITE EXISTENCE'. If the essence of experiencing manifestation without the background is not fully realized, there is no hope in understanding the 'dreamless sleep'. To hold on to a familiar state of awareness that is experienced in waking state and attempt to bring this familiar experience to

'dreamless sleep' state is a distortion of what awareness is. It is an attempt of our thinking mechanism to replicate to what it thinks 'pure awareness' is into 'dreamless sleep'. If 'conscious knowing' does not give way to spontaneity of being no one, then there is no hope in understanding 'unconsciousness'. Knowingness is the very flow of spontaneous manifestation.

Good Luck!"

On someone facing sleeplessness at the I AM phase, John Tan wrote in 2020, "Because there is unwillingness to drop away the background awareness.

Dedicate few months to the practice of belly breathing exercises. With each breath feel the sensations and pulsation of the palms and sink into calmness and peace. There is a critical phase where the "thinking" process and thoughts and whatever are taken over by the flow of the breath and pulsation of the palm...then the issue will be overcome. Once we get used to this technique, we will be able to cease thinking process without holding anything, without affirming anything. This art can be mastered without much difficulty post anatta.

It is not easy to overcome such issues that is why I try to prevent you from over focusing on the background source when you first experienced I AM."

"If you can truly 'when sleeping just sleep' without the slightest trace of holding/self/Self, you will not be insomniac, and there will not be energy imbalances. The problem is that one has not fully actualized anatta, there are energy imbalances and other issues causing insomnia..

Of course there can be other issues involved. I think in Tibetan medicine there is something called Bimala (https://www.siddhienergetics.com/products/bimala) or Aga-35 (https://www.siddhienergetics.com/products/agar-35) which is supposed to be quite effective and a good alternative to sleeping pills (I never tried, and don't need it for now). Lopon Malcolm Smith and other Tibetan masters often recommend either of them to be taken along with a normal 2 oz (2 oz = 59.1471ml) pour of aged tawny port. On the difference between Bimala vs Agar-35, someone wrote, *"For a reliable answer about their differences and when one would be better than the other, you'd need to talk to Malcolm. But my understanding is that Bimala is a bit warming, so good for people who run cold, whereas Agar 35 is more cooling, so one is better for certain constitutions than others. Bimala is also specifically indicated for a condition called "wind in the heart," which I *think* involves severe depression and a flighty mind. But again, I'd get Malcolm's (or another TM doctor's) input before choosing which to take."* If you can find a Tibetan medicine doctor, that would be good. These are supposed to help with rlung/wind/vayu/energy issues. There is also another type of Tibetan medicine called Chulen that increases clarity (it is for different purpose than Bimala and Agar-35, not for helping sleep). Some Tibetan masters take these pills (bimala/agar/chulen) regularly.

Lopon Malcolm has warned that **no Tibetan herbal formulas, apart from Vimala/Bimala (due to its safe and balanced nature), should be taken without seeking advice from a qualified Tibetan doctor.**

(Other recommendations for sleep that I've heard from others include Melatonin, Chamomile tea, and L-Theanine - however, my sister informed me that although Melatonin is effective it is not so good to take it everyday, although it's quite safe for short term use as melatonin is a hormone produced by the body. You have to do your own research and don't just take my word for it, I am not a medical doctor, these are just suggestions for your research)

"Alcohol even in small amounts helps to balance the vāyu." - Kyle Dixon

John Tan also told me that even whiskey is ok as long as it is below 150ml (going above that is going to be pretty harmful - as a matter of fact, I think 150ml is too much, I think 50ml or less is more than enough) otherwise it will be harmful - you should definitely go for the lowest effective dosage. It might be helpful for energy issues, especially for the neck. Everything in moderation, even medicines. As you probably know, alcohol taken regularly and abusively results in a whole lot of health problems and diseases.

(note: however it is not so advisable to regularly rely on alcohol for sleep -

"According to the findings, alcohol does allow healthy people to fall asleep quicker and sleep more deeply for a while, but it reduces rapid eye movement (REM) sleep. And the more you drink before bed, the more pronounced these effects. REM sleep happens about 90 minutes after we fall asleep." - https://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/news/20130118/alcohol-sleep)

So chulen is like the herbal upper while aga35 and bimala is the herbal downer (well not literally, I don't think they necessarily take effect immediately like western drugs that cause an instant release of neurotransmitters in the brain, but gradually treats the energetic imbalances of the body by addresses the root causes, so they cannot be compared that way) but supposedly with less side effects and more helpful for one's energy. Lopon Malcolm who is a qualified Tibetan medicine practitioner as well, and many other rinpoches warned against some of the harmful effects of taking pharmaceuticals such as sleeping pills (and other psychotropic drugs) on a regular basis, plus they often lead to dependency.

I do not endorse any of these (bimala/aga/chulen) as I only tried chulen for some time and I have not tried agar/bimala. Many people vouch for it, so I'm just mentioning it here for people to do their own research and make their own decision. It is my opinion and John Tan's opinion that traditional medicines (whether Tibetan or Chinese) can be better at treating some of the health issues (including rlung/wind/energy). Of course, western medical advances are very good at many things, but John Tan often noted the negative side effects while taking them (e.g. "like killing all my body cells... destroying my energy system... lol"). If you have a health issue that is not life threatening (cancer, etc) and can afford some time to try out the Tibetan/Chinese traditional medicines, they can sometimes offer a better solution. Do note however that I am not trying to sow distrust in western medicines. John and I do use western medicines when needed. However John Tan also said in 2016, "I prefer Chinese medicine that aims to let the body naturally heal itself by promoting circulation... though it takes longer but you feel well." Also, as this article advises (this is especially true for serious ailments): "Alternative medicine therapies may improve health for those with cancer, but they should always be

used in conjunction with standard medical care." - https://www.livescience.com/16551-steve-jobs-alternative-medicine-pancreatic-cancer-treatment.html " - Soh, 2019

(Note: Serious energy imbalances related to depression and anxiety and traumas should be treated with the expert help of psychiatrists and psychologists, possibly with the medications as support. Modern medicine can be a vital and important part of healing and should never be downplayed. If you exhibit symptoms that may be related to these, you should be checked out by professionals.

In Soh's case of 7 days of energy imbalances in 2019, it was not related to mental issues as there was no depression, sad mood, or mental anxiety (aside from bodily sensations of tensions), nor was it related to traumas, but instead it was due to extreme intensity of luminosity - an intensity that persists throughout the day and into sleep, and an energy pattern of overfocusing and tenseness that was difficult to dissolve. That said, if you are unsure, it's better to get checked out. Additionally, you can also check out books by Judith Blackstone, which goes deeply into trauma release and relates it with nondual practice (although not exactly based on anatta practice, still it is worth reading). See: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/06/good-book-on-healing-trauma-and-nondual.html

John Tan also said, "There is a big difference between depressions caused by work or physical appearances or lack of family support...etc and issues for example related to "I AM". All those anxieties that relate to physical appearances or work load or studies etc will gradually release if the respective issues are solved. But there are issues that are like "I AM" that is your first immediate thought, so close and so immediate that are not easy to "rid"."

"Some (energy imbalances) may relate to opening of certain energy gates when body is not ready also.")

The topic of how non-dual and no-self is experienced in sleep is dealt more fully in the "Penetration of Wisdom into Sleep" section of this document.

Here's more descriptions about the efficacy of Bimala, etc:

"If you have difficulty sleeping at night, there are other practices you may employ to assist you. For example, having this difficulty often means that you need to coordinate the energy and function of the different elements within your body. If your energy is disordered, it prevents you from sleeping. In this case, a deep breathing practice done repeatedly can be beneficial. You might do the nine-fold purification breathing8before going to sleep. There are also physical exercises such as a series of eight movements9 found in Yantra Yoga that can help develop your capacity for correct breathing and also balance your energies as an aid to sleeping. In addition, there are Tibetan medicines to assist a person who has difficulty sleeping. Unlike sleeping pills they do not cause dependence or other side effects.

These medicines, such as Agar 35 and Vimala,10 can be used for one or two months—as long as you need, really—and will not cause any negative side effects. Rather, they will help your health and coordinate your energy. When you do not

need the medicine anymore, you can stop without withdrawal symptoms or negative effects. That is the benefit of these Tibetan medicines.

If you have become habituated to Western sleeping pills, you can initially alternate them with Tibetan pills in order to lessen the dependency. One night you use Western medicine, and the next night you use Agar 35. After one or two weeks of alternating, you will be able to stop taking the Western medicine without a problem.

You must not think only of Tibetan medicine when it comes to assuring a good night's sleep. You should also work with breathing in the manner previously mentioned, as this is very related to sleep.

Sometimes you cannot sleep because one of your three humors11 is disturbed. When the wind humor is disturbed one has particular trouble sleeping. Wind is linked with prana or energy. When prana is disturbed it is difficult to sleep. For more information on this you can consult books on Tibetan medicine. In a book I wrote12 on the topic there is an explanation of the three humors and of how to overcome problems. For example, to overcome problems related to wind disease, it is helpful to go to bed earlier in the evening, to sleep with warm clothes, and to have something like soup to eat just before going to bed. If you are not sleeping at night, and instead of relaxing you work hard until late hours, or you eat raw vegetables, this may further aggravate the condition. There are many things to learn in Tibetan medical books.

Everything is related. First try these preparations so you can fall asleep. If you have succeeded, then you can do the practice of the night. If your situation is between falling asleep immediately, and not being able to fall asleep, then visualize a white "A" or "A", but one that is not very bright. If you have a problem falling asleep, you must not visualize the white "A" as too bright, and you could also visualize it in a sphere of five colors. This makes it easier to fall asleep. There are many kinds of people and many situations; we should know about all of them.

- Dzogchen teacher Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light

" You should take Vimala about an hour before sleeping.

Why are you taking magnesium citrate?

You should seperate Vimala from Magnesium citrate by about an hour. Vimala may be used as needed. It can be made a little more effective by taking it with warm milk or a small spot of brandy, port, or other aged alchohol. Vimala may also be taken early in the morning to calm anxiety.

N" - malcolm, 2011

" Mostly because in Tibetan medicine we don't load up on pills all at the same time.

The purpose of Vimala is to help one sleep and otherwise reduce symptoms of vata disturbances."

" Pema Rigdzin wrote:
Namdrol,

Would it be OK to take semde in the a.m. and vimala at bedtime?

I ask because nearly a month of taking vimala every night has resolved my anxiety pretty much entirely, but while it's really taken the edge off my depression, it still lingers on.

Malcolm: Yes. Take semde in the am."

"Malcolm: If you have an anxiety disorder, you should try and speak to a qualified TM [tibetan medicine] practitioner."

" Re: Bimala

Post by Malcolm » Sat Mar 17, 2012 11:17 pm

treehuggingoctopus wrote:
Thank you guys. One more silly question: how much are you supposed to take? Would one pill per day be enough?

Malcolm:
2" [12:54 PM, 8/23/2020] Soh Wei Yu: on Malcolm's credentials as Tibetan medicine doctor: " Malcolm Smith

Malcolm Smith has been a student of the Great Perfection teachings since 1992. His main Dzogchen teachers are Chogyal Namkhai Norbu and the late Kunzang Dechen Lingpa. He is a veteran of a traditional three-year solitary Tibetan Buddhist retreat, a published translator of Tibetan Buddhist texts, and was awarded the Acharya degree by the Sakya Institute in 2004. He graduated in 2009 from Shang Shung Institute's School of Tibetan Medicine. He has worked on translations for renowned lamas since 1992, including His Holiness Sakya Trizin, Kyabgön Phakchok Rinpoche, Kunzang Dechen Lingpa, Khenpo Migmar Tseten, Tulku Dakpa Rinpoche, Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche and many others. "

Malcolm smith was also asked to teach dzogchen by his guru kunzang dechen lingpa who attained rainbow body/full awakening/buddhahood
[1:27 PM, 8/23/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Description from https://www.siddhienergetics.com/collections/mood-sleep

Mood & Sleep

Tibetan herbal medicine excels at bringing the body's energies into harmony, and thereby helping with such common complaints as mood disturbance and sleep issues. According to Tibetan medical theory, depression and insomnia stem from the same source: a disturbance in the energy system of the body. These energies, known in Tibetan as rLung, should be centered and anchored in the belly region – the famous 'hara' of the Japanese martial arts. Unfortunately, due to the incredibly stressful, complex life of us here in the modern West, the rLung gets stirred up and looses its connection to the abdomen. When this happens, it begins to flow upward toward the head, causing all kinds of disorders, including anxiety, exhaustion, mood disturbance and depression, insomnia, and racing thoughts.

When brought back into alignment through the use of herbal formulas such as Agar 35 and Semde, the result is an empowered, focused, relaxed and less defended state of mind. Chronic problems like insomnia and anxiety are reduced and sometimes disappear entirely. One feels more in control and thus, able to deal with life's turbulence. A Tibetan doctor once told me that in hundreds of patient visits he had never met a Westerner whose subtle energy was not disturbed and who could not, therefore, benefit from these formulas."

For a practice on regulating energy through vase breathing that brings rLung/wind/energy back to the dantien, refer to the **Vase Breathing** instructions in the **Tips on Energy Imbalances** chapter.

(For more information, see chapter: **Tips on Energy Imbalances**)

STAGE 2: I AM Everything

"I am the rain
I am the sky
I am the 'blueness'
The color of the sky
Nothing is more real than the I
Therefore Buddha, I am I."
- John Tan, 2006

"It is bringing this I AM into everything. I AM the I in you. The I in the cat, the I in the bird. I AM the first person in everyone and Everything. I. That is my second phase. That the I is ultimate and universal." - John Tan, 2013

"Stage 2 is like non-dual and sunk back to a source. It is always the source, the Self, the background, even if you fuse and merge into everything." - John Tan, 2007

"Indirectly, you are aware of the Unmanifested in and through the sensory realm. In other words, you feel the God-essence in every creature, every flower, every stone, and you realize: `All that is, is holy." This is why Jesus, speaking

entirely from his essence or Christ identity, says in the Gospel of Thomas: "Split a piece of wood; I am there. Lift up a stone, and you will find me there." - Eckhart Tolle, The Power of Now

"Observer and observed as one is non-dual experience. Stage 2 is non-dual but there is no insight of no-self. Insight is [that] you know and understand the pathless path of no-self. You see it although it is pathless. You see the path. This is due to insight and therefore there is more permanent lucidity. Stage 2 remains as a stage - you don't know how to get it. Don't know when it comes again or the path towards it. Longchen (Sim Pern Chong) knows it but needs to further refine it by penetrating into the deeper depth of non-dual and into anatta as stated in the bahiya sutta, then comes emptiness. So you understand more about the various stages? Stage 1 can be very blissful too when the meditative strength is there, but there is no understanding of the 'forms. Only the pure sense of existence in thought realm. Not in the 'forms'. You should know by now. It is difficult for people who have no experience to know what I meant. But when you have experienced, you will know what I meant."

- John Tan, 2008

This is Stage 2: https://www.facebook.com/521855784/posts/10156891243275785/

"Although in my I AM phase, if you look into my e-journal, I went through the phase of impersonality where the I turns universal, I think it is not the full blown Stage 2.
John Tan did not want to lead me too deeply into I AM as he was worried that he will have a hard time getting me 'out of it' because the I AM is seen as ultimate.
But the I turning universal is natural also for one who matures the four aspects of I AM, but with the pointers in the AtR guide there won't be much danger of continuously reifying and creating abstractions. It is the way to nondual along with the nondual contemplations.

John TanFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:22pm UTC+08
Also I did not lead you to I AM everything.
Soh Wei YuFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:26pm UTC+08
oic.. how is I AM everything like?
John TanFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:28pm UTC+08
It is bringing this I AM into everything. I AM the I in you. The I in the cat, the I in the bird. I AM the first person in everyone and Everything. I.
Soh Wei YuFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:29pm UTC+08
is this related to impersonality?
Soh Wei YuFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:30pm UTC+08
i dont think this is the samkhya understanding though. samkhya understanding of purusha is very individualistic..
John TanFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:30pm UTC+08
After impersonality and the experience of the higher power, you should progress into that.
Soh Wei YuFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:30pm UTC+08
when i experience impersonality it is something similar.. like universal
Soh Wei YuFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:30pm UTC+08
everything is from the same consciousness
John TanFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:31pm UTC+08

But because I worry you sank too deep and I worry I can't lead you out...lol. There was a period you went too deep into I AMness so I did not tell you to explore further into it. Instead I tell you to look into dissolving the subject/object duality.
Soh Wei YuFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:34pm UTC+08
Oic..
John TanFriday, February 21, 2014 at 9:35pm UTC+08
Otherwise it should be dwelling further into the ultimate of I. Instead of dissolving subject/object division. I am the phase. That is my second phase. That the I is ultimate and universal. For you, after direct apprehension of Awareness, I think there is no point to further strengthen this tendency to that level." – Soh, 2020

[4:14 pm, 09/05/2022] John Tan: Stage 2 is different. You should not assume from a non-dual or anatta perspective in stage 2. In order words, the idea of "de-construction" is not present at that point in time.

You didn't actually go through that also. I told you not to extrapolate. For stage 2, it is very focused on the "I AM". The "mind" has a non-dual experience but it couldn't understand it. So the mind projects the very "I" in me is the very "I" in you; Is the "I AM" in yin ling; is the "I AM" of my dog, the "I AM" in the fish swimming.
[4:17 pm, 09/05/2022] John Tan: Then we project a even bigger "I" being multiplied as "I AM" in all these individual "I AM" and equate that with "God".
[4:18 pm, 09/05/2022] John Tan: There is no de-construction of mental constructs, opposite in fact. An infinite multiplication of that "I".

STAGE 3: Entering into Nothingness

I (Soh) did not go through this phase in his practice. By practicing the four aspects of I AM and nondual contemplations/bahiya sutta, I skipped from I AM into non dual and then anatta. Should one bypass this phase 3? John Tan sometimes seem to imply I am missing out something, but he also told me that I do not need to promote this phase when sharing with others.

Phase 3 is about entering into a state of oblivion to get rid of the sense of "I". In this phase, John Tan "came to one important understanding – The 'I' is the root cause of all artificialities, true freedom is in spontaneity. Surrender into complete nothingness and everything is simply Self So." - John Tan, 2006

"Associating 'death of I' with vivid luminosity of your experience is far too early. This will lead you into erroneous views because there is also the experience of practitioners by way of complete surrendering or elimination (dropping) like Taoist practitioners. An experience of deep bliss that is beyond that of what you experienced can occur. But the focus is not on luminosity but effortlessness, naturalness and spontaneity. In complete giving up, there is no 'I' ; it is also needless to know anything; in fact 'knowledge' is considered a stumbling block. The practitioner drops away mind, body, knowledge...everything. There is no insight, there is no luminosity there is only total allowing of whatever that happens,

happen in its own accord. All senses including consciousness are shut and fully absorbed. Awareness of 'anything' is only after emerging from that state.

One is the experience of vivid luminosity while the other is a state of oblivious. It is therefore not appropriate to relate the complete dissolving of 'I' with what you experienced alone." - John Tan, 2008

“Yes Tyler, the mysterious pass. It can only come as a "leap over" because it can't be approached with a "known mind". Therefore the mysterious gate is dark. So subjective radiance from one's clarity is secondary, entirely not a concern at all. When we look at the idea of Mu and the technique of koan, it is not difficult to see that zen is a crossbreed...lol” – John Tan, 2018

“[22/4/18, 8:40:51 PM] John Tan: Lately I kept seeing articles and conversations relating to "nothingness" wonder why. The mysterious gate of taoism.
[22/4/18, 8:42:31 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. maybe you should write something about it.. lol
[22/4/18, 8:44:36 PM] John Tan: Lol...Taoist valley spirit is the opposite of clarity...it attempts to express the depth "source" of life.
[22/4/18, 8:47:18 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. sounds like Christianity? Was reading some Christian mystic website I think based on Father Thomas keating. They are aware of I AM and witnessing but states that the goal of Christian contemplation is beyond that, is the source of that and will and doing
[22/4/18, 8:47:21 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Or something like that
[22/4/18, 8:47:45 PM] John Tan: Nothingness. Even nisargadatta (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2019/03/thusnesss-comments-on-nisargadatta.html)
[22/4/18, 8:49:22 PM] John Tan: There is nothing to contemplate as it cannot be approached through a known mind. They call it contemplative prayer
[22/4/18, 8:49:55 PM] Soh Wei Yu: More like prayer.. or meditation.. dunno what is it. Maybe surrendering
[22/4/18, 8:50:08 PM] John Tan: Yes. The tao is the way. The way of always in Union with the "source". Or even yoga. One has to be aware of this dimension but nothing to seek. It is rather only in daily encounter and manifestation
[22/4/18, 8:55:00 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Union with source is like divine happening? Not my will but the source
[22/4/18, 8:56:12 PM] John Tan: Yes but we cannot approach the "unfathomable depth" through "knowing". only moment to moment gnosis in seeing, feeling, thinking, tasting, hearing and smelling.
[22/4/18, 8:57:30 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Knowing as in intellect?
[22/4/18, 8:58:51 PM] John Tan: Yes intellect. The way to understanding the nature of aliveness and clarity is to fully "live" and "express".
[22/4/18, 8:59:00 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[22/4/18, 9:00:01 PM] John Tan: Taoism is unique in this sense in expressing this dark illumination
[22/4/18, 9:03:33 PM] Soh Wei Yu: How is it unique?
[22/4/18, 9:09:19 PM] John Tan: it is not really interest in presence. But what is behind presence...when in deep sleep, where is awareness? So the valley spirit is often described as dark. How is this different from anatta?

[22/4/18, 9:24:30 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Anatta does not see something behind presence but source is none other than manifestation
[22/4/18, 9:25:10 PM] John Tan: What does source is none other manifestation mean to you?
[22/4/18, 9:26:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Means when hearing sound, I don't see it arising out of a nothingness but sound springs from right where it is fully aliveness and full expression of life
[22/4/18, 9:27:59 PM] John Tan: First you must differentiate between experiential insight that there is nothing behind and directly experiencing presence as the 6 entries and exits. From seeing through conventions and how the mind mistaken. How the mind mistakes and reify conventions. How the mind attempt to fix and fit and explain in a "known" pattern according to its existing paradigm. What are the difference? And only when these 2 insights arise, practitioner can clearly understand and experience.
[22/4/18, 9:34:30 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Insight that there is nothing behind is realising anatta, directly experience presence is all six senses is just PCE"

"[Stages] 1-2 are non dual experience. [Stage] 3 is dropping. [Stages] 5-6 is non-dual insight" - John Tan, 2006

Session Start: Sunday, March 16, 2008

(12:35 PM) Thusness: it is not appropriate to ask me whether it is nirodha samapatti.
(12:35 PM) Thusness: as it is mislead people thinking of ones attainment.
(12:35 PM) Thusness: will mislead
(12:40 PM) Thusness: ic.
(12:40 PM) Thusness: what i said is stage 3.
(12:40 PM) AEN: btw i think at first i tink its a little bit scary... but i just let go
(12:41 PM) AEN: oic
(12:43 PM) Thusness: I think i stated quite clearly in stage 3.
(12:43 PM) Thusness: the mind after going through few of these experiences need to sort out and integrate all these experiences.
(12:44 PM) AEN: icic..
(12:44 PM) Thusness: therefore i tell you to drop
(12:44 PM) Thusness: for dropping is the antidote of intense vividness
(12:44 PM) Thusness: and dropping allows you to have another experience
(12:45 PM) AEN: different experience?
(12:45 PM) Thusness: yes
(12:45 PM) Thusness: did i tell you it is the same experience?
(12:45 PM) Thusness: read what i wrote about stage 3.
(12:45 PM) AEN: However I came to one important understanding –
The 'I' is the root cause of all artificialities, true freedom is in spontaneity. Surrender into complete nothingness and everything simply Self So.
(12:45 PM) AEN: this?

(12:45 PM) Thusness: yes
(12:45 PM) Thusness: i didn't talk about luminosity
(12:46 PM) Thusness: clarity
(12:46 PM) Thusness: i said it is a state of oblivious
(12:47 PM) Thusness: the purpose of me telling you to drop is for you to get around the problem of intense luminosity and at the same time experience naturalness and spontaneity by way of dropping. however all these experiences contribute later to the insight of anatta. or great clarity of anatta.
(12:48 PM) Thusness: therefore i told you to summarize at the same time. and also learn how to drop
(12:51 PM) Thusness: anatta is like the integration of both with right understanding.

(2:17 PM) Thusness: with luminosity and dropping, you experience new frontiers and refinement of what you know about consciousness then continue to summarize it.
(2:17 PM) Thusness: and take the bahiya sutta seriously until the insight dawn.

John Tan advised Soh to practice dropping as a complementary practice with self-enquiry between 2008~2010. It should be noted that there are different phases of 'dropping', so just practice according to where you are.

Six Stages of Dropping
First is 'someone' is dropping...
Second is dropping appears as a mirror reflecting...
Third is there is only endless dropping without footing and mental reasoning...
Fourth is dropping as vivid wide opening...
Fifth is vivid wide opening as everything...
Sixth is only Dharma spontaneously manifesting...
~ John Tan, 2008

The last two stages of dropping require deep insights into non-dual, anatta and emptiness (see below).

STAGE 4: Presence as Mirror Bright Clarity

The realization:

The taste of non-dual Presence, previously felt to be a formless background, is now tasted in the foreground as sound, colors, scents, textures and fabric of whatever manifests, through a (partial) realization of No-Self and the penetration of the illusionary paradigm of subject-object/ perceiver-perceived division or duality. The beginning of non-dual realization, but not yet the full maturity.

Triggered by contemplating:

There is thinking, no thinker
There is sound, no hearer
Suffering exists, no sufferer
Deeds there are, no doer

"This time it was not 'I AM', it was not asking 'who am I', it was not the pure sense of "I AM", it was 'TONGSss....', the pure Sound..." - John Tan, 2006

"There was no gap in between, no longer a few months gap for it to arise...
There never was a stage to enter, no I to cease and never had it existed
There is no entry and exit point...
There is no Sound out there or in here...
There is no 'I' apart from the arising and ceasing...
The manifold of Presence...
Moment to moment Presence unfolds..." - John Tan, 2006

"Ringing Sound

At the time of his enlightenment, a Zen Master said, "When I hear the sound of the bell ringing, there is no bell, and also no I, only ringing-sound."

原文

当我听到钟响的声音，
没有钟，
也没有我，
只有响声。

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5AFp5M5hw1w"- Soh posted in Ringing Sound

"Non-dual realization on the other hand is a deep understanding that comes from seeing through the illusory nature of subject-object division. It is a natural non-dual state that resulted from an insight that arises after rigorous investigation, challenge and a prolonged period of practice that is specially focused on 'No-Self'. Somehow focusing on "No-Self" will spark a sense of sacredness towards the transient and fleeting phenomena. The sense of sacredness that is once the monopoly of the Absolute is now also found in the Relative. The term 'No-Self' like Zen-Koan may appear cryptic, senseless or illogical but when realized, it is actually obviously clear, direct and simple." - John Tan, 2009

"Effectively PHASE 4 is merely the experience of non-division between subject/object. The initial insight glimpsed from the anatta stanza is without self, but in the later phase of my progress it appeared more like subject/object as an inseparable union, rather than absolutely no-subject." - John Tan, 2009

[4/3/19, 5:15:18 PM] John Tan: The phases of insight of anatta, what did I say?
[4/3/19, 5:16:39 PM] John Tan: The great death is the I AM in Zen.
[4/3/19, 5:18:10 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yes, the first rank of Tōzan https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/02/tozan-ryokais-verses-on-five-ranks.html
[4/3/19, 5:18:20 PM] John Tan: Yes. So how do you know it is not final but an initial entry into the gate?
[4/3/19, 5:19:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Hmm later that taste is brought to all sense doors and wrong view of self/Self is seen through
[4/3/19, 5:19:48 PM] John Tan: Yes! Because when all sense doors are shut, that taste is exactly the same as that sound! That is precisely what was realized. The taste is the same as I AM. I did not seek it, it was revealed.

The experience:

At this phase, experience switches back and forth between One Mind and No Mind, due to persisting view/paradigm of inherent existence despite nondual realization. In fact, if you look at certain people like Ken Wilber in his journal/book 'One Taste', he kept switching between Witnessing (I AM) and nondual (one mind to no mind) despite their insight of non-dual (Stage 4), and occasionally lose access even to that Witnessing (such as when drinking alcohol, thus resuming the merely normal, egoic state of consciousness). This is because the very deeply rooted view of inherency as well as subject-object paradigm is still present, therefore non-dual Presence cannot be effortlessly sustained. After Stage 5 is realized deeply, there will be no more switching, there will not be a trace of subject-object duality and agency 24/7, and no mind becomes constant. Even wine does not disturb my state of no-mind the slightest, however I must say on the occasions I consume alcohol, it is always in low amounts, except on one occasion many years ago where I did drink so much as to feel unsafe to drive for a while, and even then it did not throw me out of nondual. Post anatta, the baseline state of consciousness is naturally joyous, perfect and pure, unperturbed by the fluctuations of moodiness/happiness and thus no 'bad mood' requiring a mood lift from a drug like alcohol, nor do I feel like I need other kinds of drugs, such as psychedelic drugs, because my state of consciousness is like being on LSD all the time while sober and without bad side effects. (And psychedelics can only at most give short glimpses of what becomes permanent after stable realization, see: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/02/madness-or-nirvana-psychedelics-paradox.html)

John Tan wrote in 2011 shortly after my anatta realization (Stage 5):

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../realization...

"I saw this quote in your forum thread Any living enlightened Master? I wonder why you quoted it, it doesn't seem relevant. Nevertheless with the recent insight into anatta, I am sure you no more concur with Judith Blackstone that

“Complete nondual realization is said to be extremely rare, if it is possible at all.” In fact not only is complete non-dual possible, it is simply the beginning. In the realm of no-mind, all experiences are implicitly non-dual and effortless. This should not be a mystery to you by now.

The purpose of bringing up Judith Blackstone quote is not to boast about one’s achievement but to convey an additional point in practice. That is in addition to experience and realization, you have to embrace the ‘right view’. I have mentioned to you in the article Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives, I will re-iterate it here:

To mature this realization, even direct experience of the absence of an agent will prove insufficient; there must also be a total new paradigm shift in terms of view; we must free ourselves from being bonded to the idea, the need, the urge and the tendency of analyzing, seeing and understanding our moment to moment of experiential reality from a source, an essence, a center, a location, an agent or a controller and rest entirely on anatta and Dependent Origination.

Therefore despite the clear realization and right experience, seamlessness and effortlessness of non-dual experience will not be smooth without ‘right view’. The reason though obvious is often overlooked; if deep at the back of a practitioner’s mind he still hold the dualistic and inherent view, how is it possible to have seamless and effortless experience of in seeing, just scenery; in hearing, just sound? How unreserved, open and seamless can a practitioner be in transcending the self altogether into the transience? Hence equip oneself with a view that can integrate with the realization and experience, it will help practitioners progress more smoothly. Understanding the impact of view in practice is what I find lacking in many of your posts. You may want to look into it.

With regards to the attachment of view, it does not apply to practitioners that have gone pass certain phases of insights. Practitioners after certain phases of insights are constantly abolishing ground and are clear that whatever pith instructions and views are merely provisional. There are masters that caution practitioners and there are students that parrot their masters’ advises, so do not follow blindly. In fact if understood correctly every deepening of view is a giving up. In the case of anatta, it is the total elimination of Self.
"Bhikkkhus, as purified and bright as this view is, if you covet, cherish, treasure and take pride in it, do you understand this Dhamma as comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up [i.e. crossing over] and not for the purpose of grasping?" "No, venerable sir." "Bhikkhus, as purified and bright as this view is, if you do not covet, cherish, treasure and take pride in it, would you then know this Dhamma as comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up [i.e. crossing over] and not for the purpose of grasping?" "Yes, venerable sir."
source: http://www.leighb.com/mn38.htm”

Judith Blackstone is still at one mind phase (Stage 4) so she cannot fathom at her level of insight how is total and constant nondual possible effortlessly. Her view of inherency is still obscuring. Same for Ken Wilber. Although I enjoyed reading the books of both authors very much.

As for John Tan, he wrote that after his realisation of anatta in around 1997, there was a period of instability and going back and forth between one mind and no mind before all traces of subject/object and agency dissolves and the state of no mind becomes the default natural state. Since then, he no longer experiences even a trace of subject/object duality or

sense of agent/agency. Before the realisation of anatta, he had experiences and glimpses of one mind but without the realisation there is no breakthrough.

One Mind

A changeless open and limitless space of awareness that is indistinguishable/inseparable from, but not identical to, the changing contents of consciousness that it contains.

"(One Mind) Means consciousness is of true existence like a container. Consciousness is not in the body, but the body is in consciousness. Sound arises in consciousness. Therefore consciousness doesn't change." - John Tan, 2013

“15/4/13 12:37:11 AM: John Tan: One mind is you are always looking at an ultimate mind behind, you are not looking at manifestation
15/4/13 12:37:26 AM: Soh Wei Yu: But it's not I Am right
15/4/13 12:37:36 AM: John Tan: Yes it is not
15/4/13 12:38:18 AM: Soh Wei Yu: It's like integrating foreground as being an aspect of background
15/4/13 12:38:28 AM: John Tan: Everything is consumed into the source (for One Mind)
15/4/13 12:39:24 AM: John Tan: I am is just the pure background behind but external objects are not subsumed into it... like separate
15/4/13 12:39:48 AM: John Tan: I am I ....dualistic

15/4/13 12:41:53 AM: John Tan: In this case (One Mind) all is being consumed/subsumed into the source
15/4/13 12:42:45 AM: John Tan: Sound is consciousness is not one mind but no mind”

“14/5/13 9:39:15 PM: John Tan: One mind is different. One mind as I told you is the witness is gone but subsume into an overarching Awareness”

“[24/6/24, 2:04:33 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I told nafis “I personally think in stage 4, should ask people to contemplate the anatta stanzas already instead of waiting for stage 5” (Soh: on the two stanzas of anatta, see On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection (Available in Languages: AR, DA, DE, EN, ES, FR, HI, ID, IT, JA, KO, NE, PL, PT-BR, PT-PT, RU, SR, TA, TH, VI, ZH))
[24/6/24, 2:04:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: What do you think?
[24/6/24, 2:13:53 PM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted
[24/6/24, 3:33:53 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I think its safer for them to just contemplate anatta straight rather than aim for one mind? To me one mind is the result of the lack of thoroughness of insight into no self, so no need to particularly aim for. Although i think many will go through it inadvertently <This message was edited>
[24/6/24, 3:38:52 PM] John Tan: Practitioner will almost without fail skewed towards one-mind because both subject and object are non-arisen is not understood. Therefore latching back to a mind and making it more ultimate despite non-dual experiences becomes the default.

[24/6/24, 3:39:05 PM] Soh Wei Yu: In my case there was a short one mind phase when i was contemplating no self, bahiya sutta, the borderlessness between awareness and manifestation, etc. not very clear cut
[24/6/24, 3:39:07 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I see
[24/6/24, 3:39:44 PM] John Tan: Yes
[24/6/24, 3:40:23 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah the nondual is there even before mind is thoroughly deconstructed and seen through

I think one can start contemplating on the two stanzas though soon after I AM (Soh: on the two stanzas of anatta, see On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection (Available in Languages: AR, DA, DE, EN, ES, FR, HI, ID, IT, JA, KO, NE, PL, PT-BR, PT-PT, RU, SR, TA, TH, VI, ZH))
[24/6/24, 3:40:45 PM] John Tan: Yes"

Soh also informed Nafis previously, "I personally think in stage 4, should ask people to contemplate the anatta stanzas already instead of waiting for stage 5

Can tell them to contemplate the two anatta stanzas in stage 5. But very often even those who have breakthroughs from the stanzas will end up in one mind phase at first

Thats why john said in stage 5 *"Effectively Phase 4 is merely the experience of non-division between subject/object. The initial insight glimpsed from the anatta stanza is without self but in the later phase of my progress it appeared more like subject/object as an inseparable union, rather than absolutely no-subject. This is precisely the 2nd case of the Three levels of understanding Non-Dual. I was still awed by the pristineness and vividness of phenomena in phase 4."* - *https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2007/03/thusness-six-stages-of-experience.html* "

No Mind

Peak experiences of no subjectivity - but not effortless nor perpetual, as the default view is still based on inherent existence and subtle subject/object duality.

"(No Mind) is as if consciousness is the substance of matter. When we say sound-consciousness, there is no such thing as sound and sound-consciousness... When the hearer is gone and there is only sound, that sound is precisely consciousness. That is the experience of no-mind." - John Tan, 2013

(Note: after anatta realization, one would be cautious of using the term 'substance' - it should be as Alan Watts expressed, without view of an inherently existing substance - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/06/alan-watts-agent-and-action.html)

"No mind is like the mirror becomes transparent and there is just that. But the view is the reflection and the mirror is not the same. Like sky is not the flowing cloud." - John Tan, 2013

“(11:19 PM) John: you may have no-mind as an experience and understood that there is such an experience as simple manifestation or just the radiant world but still it remains as a stage. you have no idea that it is a wrong view [that hinders effortless actualization]. we do not 'see' that it is the wrong view that 'blinds', a mistaken view shaping our entire experience
(11:22 PM) Soh: icic.. dharma dan calls it the knot of perception, right?
(11:23 PM) John: yes
(11:23 PM) Soh: so no mind is a stage?
(11:24 PM) John: no-mind is the peak of non-dual, the natural state of non-dual where the background is completely gone. very often a practitioner in an advance phase of non-dual and One Mind, will naturally knows the importance of no-mind. And that becomes the practice. they know they have to be there. However, to come to this natural state of non-dual where the background is deemed irrelevant, it requires insight of anatta.” - Differentiating I AM, One Mind, No Mind and Anatta

“Session Start: Sunday, 29 May, 2011

(7:17 PM) Thusness: anatta is often not correctly understood. it is common that one progress from experience of non-dual to no-mind instead of direct realization into anatta. many focus on the experience and there is a lack of clarity to penetrate the differences, so you must be clear of the various phases of insights first and not mistake one for the other. at the same time, refine your experience these few days... have deeper sleep and exercise more. balance your body energies” - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/11/no-mind-and-anatta-focusing-on-insight.html

“Many treat no mind, non-dual as experience and I AM as the ultimate reality. They are not into the path of wisdom.” – John Tan, 2020

"So what is one mind, what is no mind and what is original mind in this context? One mind is post non-dual but subsuming leaving trace. No mind is just one mind except that there is evenness till the last trace is gone. Like what explains in the text. Uji... all is time therefore no time. When you go from dual to non dual or one mind to no mind, those are stages and experiences... If you got the condition to get pointed out that originally there never was a mind, there are no stages to climb... that is original mind. This requires insights and wisdom." - John Tan, 2020

(Note by Soh: the original mind spoken here does not mean some unborn metaphysical primordial mind such as the I AM, but the originally, already-is nature of mind -- empty of itself -- "originally there never was a mind", empty of all self/Self)

Later on, John Tan made another clarification (in 2020):

[8:15 PM, 9/8/2020] John Tan: 1-3 Cessation and dual. Phase 4 insight onwards is non-dual.
[8:16 PM, 9/8/2020] John Tan: Cessation is important when you want to rid the Self but no way to do it...lol
[8:16 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[8:58 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: so one mind is phase 4 onwards?
[8:58 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: before phase 4 you also had glimpse of one mind right

[9:01 PM, 9/8/2020] John Tan: One mind doesn't matter dual or non-dual, it is just a subsuming tendency that the mind attempts to explain everything into an ultimate consciousness.
[9:02 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. so stage 2 [also it can be stage 1] is also like one mind except dualistic
[9:02 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: stage 4 is like nondual but still have subsuming tendency so might not yet overcome one mind
[9:02 PM, 9/8/2020] John Tan: Yes.
[9:02 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: ic.. yeah i remember during I AM i also had subsuming tendency
[9:02 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: but [that I AM sort of one mind was somewhat] different from post nondual [as in, nondual sort of One Mind] but only really overcome subsuming after anatta
[9:03 PM, 9/8/2020] John Tan: Subsuming tendency is always beautiful to an inherent mind.
[9:03 PM, 9/8/2020] John Tan: 🤣
[9:04 PM, 9/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: lol yeah

“Someone wrote on https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/permalink/3999299513444782/: Hey folks, thanks for allowing me to join this group. I'm currently ploughing through the epic tome that is 'Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind'. Right now I have consistent access to One Mind as an experience and periodic, but not consistent, access to No Mind as an experience. Judging by what I've read so far, the missing piece is deeper insight into anatta to make the flip from 'temporary experience' to 'baseline ground reality'. Over the last few months I've been practising a certain kind of letting go to cause the No Mind experience to arise more consistently, but I guess the AtR view is that this approach is somewhat mistaken and my time would be better spent contemplating anatta?

Soh replied:

Welcome to atr group.

Not exactly mistaken because no mind is important, but should compliment with the two stanzas and bahiya sutta style of contemplation and make sure not to contemplate in a way of making it a state but in a way that addresses the view aspect.

For example in this article Robert explained his earlier mistake was taking bahiya sutta as simply a way to induce a state of no mind rather than contemplating to realize the view aspect:

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../Robert%20Dominik

Also these articles should help:

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../the-wind-is...

And this, along with comments by PasserBy (thusness) in the comments section:

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../ajahn-amaro-on...

1/14/2012 10:30 PM: John: Anatta is about right view... Means you must have the experience of no-mind and realized no self with right view. Or you have no mind experience and with the help of right view, realization dawns."

Someone asked if No Mind is Thusness Stage 3, Soh replied, "It is not stage 3 but a peak experience of the dissolution of being self/Self or a 'Mind' -- even 'One Mind'.

Hard to put no mind into a stage. For example I had glimpses of no mind even before stage 1.. also after stage 4 one is cycling between one mind and no mind until stage 5 clears that tendency as insight is very clear on anatta as always so.

No mind is like PCE. No self/Self just luminous manifestation. But as a state of experience, not necessarily realization of anatta as always so. After anatta, no mind should become a natural state."

"Natural state no-mind must come from insight of anatta." – John Tan, 2020

"[8:45 PM, 6/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: btw which year did you realise anatta. just curious lol.. 1997?
[8:51 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Lol yeah ard there
[8:52 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Anatta is not just non-dual
[8:54 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Unlike you, I have been stuck in one mind for quite some time. It is not easy to get rid of that trace.
[8:55 PM, 6/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: you were in one mind before 1997?
[8:55 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Without guidance, can take many years. Even then one may just be a state of no mind rather than anatta.
[8:57 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Yeah 1997 and before no mind also but clarity of view wasn't there. So it remains a form of experience rather than insight and realization.
[8:57 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: A state I mean.
[8:57 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Why?
[8:59 PM, 6/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: hmm... there is some insight into nondivision but not the emptiness of awareness, not anatta
[8:59 PM, 6/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: so you realised through contemplating the first stanza of anatta in 1997 but that was still followed by one mind and no mind for a few years?
[9:01 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: No... post anatta, the karmic tendency wasn't that strong anymore...maybe 1 year or so for one mind and no mind...
[9:01 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Before that overcoming of background is tough.
[9:02 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: I AM was younger than you...lol. I AM is at the age around 15. 🤣
[9:02 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: So you can see how long can one get stuck
[9:02 PM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Mr. J is even longer 🤣🤣🤣"

Three Levels of Non-Dual

First written by John Tan in 2009 - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/01/three-levels-of-understanding-of-non.html

1. There is an Awareness reflecting thoughts and manifestation. ("I AM") - John Tan Stage 1 and 2

Mirror bright is experienced but distorted. Dualistic and Inherent seeing.

2. Thoughts and manifestation are required for the mirror to see itself. - John Tan Stage 4

Non-Dualistic but Inherent seeing. Beginning of non-dual insight.

3. Thoughts and manifestation have always been the mirror (The mirror here is seen as a whole) - John Tan Stage 5

Non-Dualistic and non-inherent insight.

In 3 not even a quantum line can be drawn from whatever arises; whatever that appears to come and goes is the Awareness itself. There is no Awareness other than that. We should use the teachings of Anatta *(no-self)*, DO *(dependent origination)* and Emptiness to see the 'forms' of awareness.

How to Progress from Stage 4 into Stage 5

Investigate and challenge all sense of awareness being unchanging and independent. Contemplate on Bahiya Sutta and the Wind/Blowing analogy (see John Tan Stage 5). In John Tan Stage 4, Awareness is still understood to be a one-way dependency: transient forms are none other than (expressions of) changeless awareness but changeless awareness is not equivalent to transient forms. Contemplating on the two-way dependency can also be helpful if you like analytical approach: Greg Goode on Advaita/Madhyamika

But first of all, you need to understand the difference between Stage 4 and Stage 5 clearly. Here are some pointers:

In early 2010, before I realised anatta:

“(11:12 PM) Thusness: you are using stage 4 understanding to explain 6. I am not interested in views, only the insight that allows you to understand the right view. that is in phase 4, 'non-dual' is the insight. In phase 5, that observer is gone, there is not only no 'in' here or out 'there' not because it is non-dual, but because there is no such observer at all. Anatta. that is the 'insight' that must arise. just like what dharma dan said, you do not deny subjective or objective reality, they are only provisional and conventional. but when the dualistic and inherent hears the term 'non-dual', they either visualize the 2 becoming one or 'you have become me'... because this is how a mind that is trapped would think

despite the experience. for what that is beyond the four extremes cannot be expressed adequately using language, so what is important is the insights and see how one expresses these insights. like joan tollifson, it is the direct experience, there is no view about it

(11:30 PM) Thusness: means a practitioner will only experience hardness, softness, intentions, scenery, sound, no self, action directly. but conventionally, you are still you, I am still me. there is no such thing as you are me, get it? or there is an awareness that is sound, or all is just this awareness. there is no such concept. there is sound, sight, thoughts, and what you call awareness are just that

(11:34 PM) AEN: icic.. ya I talked about it in http://www.thetaobums.com/index.php?showtopic=13153&st=120#

(11:35 PM) Thusness: yeah but your mind is thinking some awareness, or all are just this awareness. this is a dualistic way of understanding. though experience is non-dual, that is phase 4. that is treating winter as spring and spring as autumn. that is treating fire as becoming ashes. get it? although you said that sound is awareness, you are still treating it as that. as if winter becomes spring, or winter is spring. get it? it is different

for example dharma dan said there is just sensations, thoughts...the aggregates. whether super awareness or awareness. it is different from saying sensation is awareness, thoughts is awareness as if awareness has become thoughts"

Commentary by Soh, 2021: "At phase 4 one may be trapped in the view that everything is one awareness modulating as various forms, like gold being shaped into various ornaments while never leaving its pure substance of gold. This is the Brahman view. Although such a view and insight is non-dual, it is still based on a paradigm of essence-view and 'inherent existence'. Instead, one should realise the emptiness of awareness [being merely a name just like 'weather' – see chapter on the weather analogy], and should understand consciousness in terms of dependent origination. This clarity of insight will get rid of the essence view that consciousness is an intrinsic essence that modulates into this and that. As the book 'What the Buddha Taught' by Walpola Rahula quoted two great Buddhist scriptural teachings on this matter:

It must be repeated here that according to Buddhist philosophy there is no permanent, unchanging spirit which can be considered 'Self', or 'Soul", or 'Ego', as opposed to matter, and that consciousness (vinnana) should not be taken as 'spirit' in opposition to matter. This point has to be particularly emphasized, because a wrong notion that consciousness is a sort of Self or Soul that continues as a permanent substance through life, has persisted from the earliest time to the present day.

One of the Buddha's own disciples, Sati by name, held that the Master taught: 'It is the same consciousness that transmigrates and wanders about.' The Buddha asked him what he meant by 'consciousness'. Sati's reply is classical: 'It is that which expresses, which feels, which experiences the results of good and bad deeds here and there'.

'To whomever, you stupid one', remonstrated the Master, 'have you heard me expounding the doctrine in this manner? Haven't I in many ways explained consciousness as arising out of conditions: that there is no arising of consciousness without conditions.' Then the Buddha went on to explain consciousness in detail: "Conciousness is named according to whatever condition through which it arises: on account of the eye and visible forms arises a consciousness, and it is called

visual consciousness; on account of the ear and sounds arises a consciousness, and it is called auditory consciousness; on account of the nose and odours arises a consciousness, and it is called olfactory consciousness; on account of the tongue and tastes arises a consciousness, and it is called gustatory consciousness; on account of the body and tangible objects arises a consciousness, and it is called tactile consciousness; on account of the mind and mind-objects (ideas and thoughts) arises a consciousness, and it is called mental consciousness.'

Then the Buddha explained it further by an illustration: A fire is named according to the material on account of which it burns. A fire may burn on account of wood, and it is called woodfire. It may bum on account of straw, and then it is called strawfire. So consciousness is named according to the condition through which it arises.

Dwelling on this point, Buddhaghosa, the great commentator, explains: '. . . a fire that burns on account of wood burns only when there is a supply, but dies down in that very place when it (the supply) is no longer there, because then the condition has changed, but (the fire) does not cross over to splinters, etc., and become a splinter-fire and so on; even so the consciousness that arises on account of the eye and visible forms arises in that gate of sense organ (i.e., in the eye), only when there is the condition of the eye, visible forms, light and attention, but ceases then and there when it (the condition) is no more there, because then the condition has changed, but (the consciousness) does not cross over to the ear, etc., and become auditory consciousness and so on . . .'

The Buddha declared in unequivocal terms that consciousness depends on matter, sensation, perception and mental formations, and that it cannot exist independently of them. He says:

'Consciousness may exist having matter as its means (rupupayam) matter as its object (rupdrammanam) matter as its support (rupapatittham) and seeking delight it may grow, increase and develop; or consciousness may exist having sensation as its means ... or perception as its means ... or mental formations as its means, mental formations as its object, mental formations as its support, and seeking delight it may grow, increase and develop.

'Were a man to say: I shall show the coming, the going, the passing away, the arising, the growth, the increase or the development of consciousness apart from matter, sensation, perception and mental formations, he would be speaking of something that does not exist. "

Bodhidharma likewise taught: *Seeing with insight, form is not simply form, because form depends on mind. And, mind is not simply mind, because mind depends on form. Mind and form create and negate each other. ... Mind and the world are opposites, appearances arise where they meet. When your mind does not stir inside, the world does not arise outside. When the world and the mind are both transparent, this is the true insight." (from the Wakeup Discourse)* Awakening to Reality: Way of Bodhi

"Jayson MPaul
Sangye Gyatso none of these things are about nihilism, although that is a real danger for those who misunderstand emptiness. No Mind is what is always already true. It has no existence of its own. No mind apart from phenomena, no phenomena apart from mind. This is what Soh Wei Yu meant when he said there is no true existence of mind."

"[12:27 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: As for the deconstruction process via total exertion, a more effective way will be contemplating the ayatanas (Soh: See https://suttacentral.net/mn148/en/bodhi) and consciousness sort of deconstruction..

As I told you the insight trigger from "hearer hearing sound" and "ear, sound, ear-consciousness" are different. Also "ear, sound,

ear-consciousness" imo is post anatta into phenomena and action.

[12:28 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. but ear sound ear consciousness is before deconstruction of ear and sound into total exertion right
[12:34 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Post anatta, you are left with sound. When you look at sound from "ear, sound, ear-consciousness" we are led to total exertion.
[12:38 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: But before you talk about total exertion let's look at fluxing...

Buddha named consciousness after its ayatanas. This is to prevent us from abstracting and reifying a pure self standing consciousness. In other words, consciousness is in a perpetual state of fluxing and if you where to slice a moment out of this stream of consciousness-ing, it is always one of the six types of consciousness -- eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mental-consciousness." – The Total Exertion of Success

"(10:42 PM) John: so you understand why pure consciousness is not really a correct description eh?
(10:42 PM) AEN: ya
(10:42 PM) John: like the blessed one described, it is named after its condition and organs (*Soh: See https://suttacentral.net/mn38/en/bodhi)*" – This is Impersonality Aspect, Not Anatta Realization

"[8:39 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: Your unreal means?
[8:39 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: It modulates
[8:40 PM, 6/2/2020] Soh Wei Yu: More like vividly appearing but unfindable, like reflections
[8:40 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: you seldom see me use appearance as consciousness.
[8:41 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: Buddha name consciousness along without the conditions that give rise to them.
[8:41 PM, 6/2/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Not sure what do you mean by modulate.. i mentioned in 2011 my one mind phase i see consciousness modulates as appearance. But after anatta i no longer see that way
[8:41 PM, 6/2/2020] Soh Wei Yu: There is no one consciousness modulating as many.. just vivid luminous reflection
[8:41 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: Yes...more like inefficacy.."

"15/4/13 12:53:28 AM: John Tan: Anatta is a realization that there isn't a consciousness besides sound, scenery...etc. You see through reification of that agent and get in touch with the base manifestation where the label rely upon. So sound is the actual(ity that) consciousness is referring to. There is no consciousness other than that
When they see through reification, then phenomena has a different meaning. Seeing everything as awareness is not one mind. Seeing everything as the same unchanging mind is the problem. When you see through reification, you realized "awareness" is just a label point to these manifestations. So there is nothing wrong saying that. Only when we treat awareness to be of true existence then we are deluded because there isn't any

In hearing, there is only sound. Hearing implies the presence of sound."

"1/14/2012 10:27 PM: Soh Wei Yu: I realise anatta in ruthlesstruth is very rare. Most people are talking about impersonality, not even non dual. After talking with them people still don't experience no separation

1/14/2012 10:30 PM: John: Anatta is about right view... Means you must have the experience of no-mind and realized no self with right view. Or you have no mind experience and with the help of right view, realization dawns.
1/14/2012 10:31 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. Ciaran realized no self right. Except most of his students don't... Not even non dual
1/14/2012 10:33 PM: John: Yes. Unfortunately he cannot clearly discern the grayscale of no-self"

"Sep
10
Rigpa and Aggregates
(Also see: Dzogchen, Rigpa and Dependent Origination)

From Dharma Overground, Dharma Dan (Daniel M. Ingram):

Dear Mark,

Thanks for your descriptions and analysis. They are interesting and relevant.

I think of it this way, from a very high but still vipassana point of view, as you are framing this question in a vipassana context:

First, the breath is nice, but at that level of manifesting sensations, some other points of view are helpful:

Assume something really simple about sensations and awareness: they are exactly the same. In fact, make it more simple: there are sensations, and this includes all sensations that make up space, thought, image, body, anything you can imagine being mind, and all qualities that are experienced, meaning the sum total of the world.

In this very simple framework, rigpa is all sensations, but there can be this subtle attachment and lack of investigation when high terms are used that we want there to be this super-rigpa, this awareness that is other. You mention that you feel there is a larger awareness, an awareness that is not just there the limits of your senses. I would claim otherwise: that the whole sensate universe by definition can't arise without the quality of awareness by definition, and so some very subtle sensations are tricking you into thinking they are bigger than the rest of the sensate field and are actually the awareness that is aware of other sensations.

Awareness is simply manifestation. All sensations are simply present.

Thus, be wary of anything that wants to be a super-awareness, a rigpa that is larger than everything else, as it can't be, by definition. Investigate at the level of bare sensate experience just what arises and see that it can't possibly be different from awareness, as this is actually an extraneous concept and there are actually just sensations as the first and final basis of reality.

As you like the Tibetan stuff, and to quote Padmasambhava in the root text of the book The Light of Wisdom:

"The mind that observes is also devoid of an ego or self-entity.
It is neither seen as something different from the aggregates
Nor as identical with these five aggregates.
If the first were true, there would exist some other substance.

This is not the case, so were the second true,
That would contradict a permanent self, since the aggregates are impermanent.
Therefore, based on the five aggregates,
The self is a mere imputation based on the power of the ego-clinging.

As to that which imputes, the past thought has vanished and is nonexistent.
The future thought has not occurred, and the present thought does not withstand scrutiny."

I really found this little block of tight philosophy helpful. It is also very vipassana at its core, but it is no surprise the wisdom traditions converge.

Thus, if you want to crack the nut, notice that everything is 5 aggregates, including everything you think is super-awareness, and be less concerned with what every little type of consciousness is than with just perceiving them directly and noticing the gaps that section off this from that, such as rigpa from thought stream, or awareness from sensations, as these are golden chains.

More: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/09/rigpa-and-aggregates.html"

" Karatzo wrote: ↑Sun Oct 18, 2020 9:00 pm
Consciousness is compound and thus not self, so it is not this that transmigrates. So what is it? And what is Rigpa? Rigpa is not a part of the 5 aggregates. But the buddha declared that a being consists of the 5 aggregates and nothing more. That there is no-self in absolute reality...then how transmigration works?

Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith replied:

One, whoever told you rig pa is not part of the five aggregates? Rig pa is knowledge of your own state. In its impure form one's own state manifests as the five aggregates; in its pure form, it manifests as the five buddha families.

Nagārjuna resolves this issue through using the eight examples. There is no substantial transmission, but there is serial continuity, like lighting a fire from another fire, impressing a seal on a document and so on. See his verses on dependent origination:

All migrating beings are causes and results.
but here there are no sentient beings at all;
just empty phenomena entirely produced
from phenomena that are only empty,
phenomena without a self and what belongs to a self,
[like] utterances, lamps, mirrors, seals,
lenses, seeds, sourness and echoes.
Although the aggregates are serially connected,
the wise are understand that nothing transfers.
Also, the one who imputes annihilation
upon extremely subtle existents,
is not wise,
and will not see the meaning of 'arising from conditions'."

"Now we must understand not to confuse the dynamism of vivid appearances as the substrate itself and must avoid from taking it to be therefore this imputed substrate must too be exhausted to free oneself from extremes.

Once this view is clear, the implications of mental constructs and conventions on how they confuse the mind will be understood clearly. What left is simply natural spontaneity of vivid appearance in obviousness." – John Tan, 2020

Reply to Yacine
Thusness's (John Tan's) reply to Yacine's post in Dharma Connection

Hi Yacine,

Both the talks and link you provided are pointing to a special kind of consciousness that I am familiar and was once very attached to (more than 3 decades ago). The experience is precious but still fabricated One can trigger similar experience/phenomena through self-enquiry or koan which in my opinions are much more direct and effective.

Therefore I do not think Buddha is teaching that; contrary he taught the path to end that by realizing anatta, dependent origination and Emptiness.

Sounds pretty cool John.I think where the confusion pops from is that some approaches talk about the citta as a special kind of consciousness, ie a consciounesses not glued to any of the other khandas, a consciounesses released (the citta as Ajahn Maha Boowa calls it)

Pls see https://www.dhammatalks.net/.../Maha_Boowa_The_Path_to... The non-dual teaching (say Rupert Spira talking about the fabrications of time in his classic video:https://youtu.be/PNdjzm8dKOc) would then be a pointer a

skilful means but still with a slight subtle reification left (Greg Goode mentions the complete dissolution of awareness once memory is seen as no referential) ? I am mentioning that because Rodney Smith proposes such a nice pointer on his talk on mental fabrication in the DO series above.

ie this image of the dead center from which past and future (and stories) emerge as mental fabrications. In his book he talks about the vertical axis of timeless awareness (the unconditioned) and the horizontal axis of conceptual time and stories.And how with thoughts we invest the "Buddha inside" into (apparently) buying into the conceptions of the horizontal axis stretching self, object and time (as Rob Burbea would put it) out of the pure awareness, out of the Deathless.

That's a nice pointer I found but there is this reification of the dead center in it that might need complete deconstruction (thanks to emptiness). What's your take on that? (Sorry, too many questions at once lol)

Let's take the below example:

"With the arising insight of anatta, self is seen through. A new mode of perception arises. A mode of perception that pierces through reification."

Does this sound like the practitioner has now acquired "a new mode of perception" as if a third eye suddenly appears in between the eyebrows?

In truth nothing new has arisen; contrary it is a process of elimination.

What eliminated is the habitual tendency to "reify".

Now using the same analogy, let's look at "non-dual"?

It will be helpful to understand the 2 major causes that gave rise to such phenomena like awareness as an observer and non-dual awareness. They are:

1. one's ability to suspense "conceptualization".
2. habitual tendencies to "reify" and "dualify"

Without conceptualization experience becomes direct, clean, clear, vivid, crystal, brilliance and transparent.

Without the layer of conceptualization, there is no layer that separates observer from the observed. If there is no insight that all along the subject-object division is assumed, then "non-dual" becomes a state and there is oscillation between duality and non-duality. If there is realization of the emptiness of the "division", then experiences turns effortlessly non-dual.

How does “non-dual awareness” arise?

It is the continuation of the habitual tendency to reify that objectifies the "clean, clear, vivid, crystal, brilliance and transparent" state of experience that is free from duality into non-dual awareness. This also means that latent tendencies lie far deeper than surface conceptualization, mere cessation of conceptual thoughts is unable to overcome these tendencies.

How is it to see "the world" from an arahant point of view? Without fabrication or rather with fabrication seen as fabrication and therefore divested from investment.Also some teaching say that freed consciousness is awareness and awareness bathes in the unconditioned, the Deathless (very similar to non-dual teaching ie what you're looking for your looking from it).

Would the unreified Deathless simply be seeing interdependence of all fabrication as emptiness itself ? (And of course the consciousness that cognizes emptiness has to be empty itself, dependent on seeing emptiness to co-arise) How do you see the Deathless fitting into this John?

Is untainted consciousness = non-dual awareness?

This brings out another point. That is severing the habit of abstraction and generalization also implies **ceasing the reified abstraction from flowing moment to moment**. For this is the cause of attachment. If there is no "abstraction" that flows, there is no base for grasping and the rational of why there is no permanent soul that is reincarnated from life to life in Buddhism becomes clear. Which is also why Buddha taught there is no self, only the 5 aggregates and no pure consciousness, only the 6 classes of consciousness that dependently originates with conditions (internal and external bases).

Saying untainted consciousness is non-dual awareness is no different from saying:

sound-consciousness is the same as eye-consciousness
or
mind-consciousness is same as body-consciousness.

When we conceptualize and abstract, it appears there is as if a pure consciousness that transcends conditions and it is the same consciousness throughout we are talking about in differing situations. However for one that is free from abstraction and reification, the actual experience is completely different. For them,

In hearing, whole body-mind-environment is that sound and what we termed as “sound-consciousness” is that “sound”.

In seeing, whole body-mind-environment is that scenery and what we termed as “eye-consciousness” is that lurid and vivid scenery.

At this point, it is crucial to emphasize that when the trace of a background mirror vanishes without remainder, **knowingness/presence is “form”.** Touch anything, feel anything, smell anything. Vividness throughout, aliveness everywhere! Poetically practitioners is eating “knowingness”, touching “knowingness” and tasting “knowingness” in real-time. Zero effort, fully spontaneous!

‘Mind as mountains, rivers, and the earth is nothing other than mountains, rivers, and the earth. There are no additional waves or surf, no wind or smoke. Mind as the sun, the moon, and the stars is nothing other than the sun, the moon, and the stars.’

Shobogenzo, Soku-shin-ze-butsu

For non-dualists, it is always tempting to say non-dual awareness [is] appearing as sound and scenery but sound is of course not and nothing like scenery. We also can't say sound has changed to scenery. Therefore dualistic consciousness cannot be said to be non-dual awareness yet neither are they different!

The language of forms and abstraction become clumsy and very often misleading when we deal with the nature of direct experience. Fortunately Buddhism has quite creatively devised a tool that helps us see through conventions, dissolve reification and still not miss out the importance of conditionality (another big topic). As such it is advisable to sever this habit of abstraction by familiarizing oneself with dependent arising and emptiness when dealing with everyday conventions.

As a side note, in addition to the path of renunciation (dispassion/disenchantment), you may want to look at “grasping” from “energy being tied up in withholding mental constructs”. Many seem unable to have an actual taste of the relationship between “grasping” and “reifying”, if this isn’t clear then the whole practice of anatta and emptiness (Buddhism) will not be very fruitful imo.

From this prespective, grasping is not holding on to reification, it is that reification!

This becomes very clear with the experiential insight of anatta. When self is negated, the first obvious experience is “lightness” as if weight suddenly becomes a non-existence. There is tremendous release and clarity. If we negate the body-construct, for example, "there is no body, only sensations", the deconstruction of the image of a concrete body similarly led to a tremendous release. Every deconstruction is a release (of energy) and experience turns more and more clean, pure, vivid, radiance and free.

How is it to see "the world" from an arahant point of view?

From the example above, one may be able to extrapolate the experience. For one that has severed self, experience is free, clean, radiance and non-dual. Seen is just seen. Heard is just heard. Radiance all around and free!

As for "the deathless", I believe Soh has posted you a past discussion on the topic (see http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2018/01/the-deathless-in-buddhadharma.html). I couldn't have put it better.

Lastly Yacine, for

> Rodney Smith's talk on mental fabrication in the DO series,

Imo, the "NOW" radiating out is no different from "Self", deconstruct it.

There is no "here", just impression of "here" formed by sensations and thoughts.

No "now", just impression of the mere presence from appearances of thoughts, sound, shapes, colors, light.

The tendency to reify is amazing, we let go of 'selfness' yet unknowingly grasped 'nowness' and 'hereness'.

All these are merely empty reifications, appear concrete but when directly tasted, are empty like evanescence mist.

Hope that helps!

Going to sleep, pen off.

Labels: John Tan |

When Soh was at Stage 4, John Tan wrote:

"o 12 Sep `10, 12:44PM
Hi Simpo and AEN,
Yet we cannot get carried away by all these blissful experiences. Blissfulness is the result of luminosity whereas liberation is due to prajna wisdom. 🙂
To AEN,
For intense luminosity in the foreground, you will not only have vivid experience of 'brilliant aliveness', 'you' must also completely disappear. It is an experience of being totally 'transparent' and without boundaries. These experiences are quite obvious, you will not miss it. However the body-mind will not rest in great content due to an experience of intense luminosity. Contrary it can make a practitioner more attached to a non-dual ultimate luminous state.

For the mind to rest, it must have an experience of 'great dissolve' that whatever arises perpetually self liberates. It is not about phenomena dissolving into some great void but it is the empty nature of whatever arises that self-liberates. It is the direct experience of groundlessness and non –abiding due to direct insight of the empty nature of phenomena and that includes the non-dual luminous essence.
Therefore In addition to bringing this 'taste' to the foreground, you must also 'realize' the difference between wrong and right view. There is also a difference in saying "Different forms of Aliveness" and "There is just breath, sound, scenery...magical display that is utterly unfindable, ungraspable and without essence- empty."
In the former case, realize how the mind is manifesting a subtle tendency of attempting to 'pin' and locate something that inherently exists. The mind feels uneasy and needs to seek for something due to its existing paradigm. It is not simply a matter of expression for communication sake but a habit that runs deep because it lacks a 'view' that is able to cater for reality that is dynamic, ungraspable, non-local , center-less and interdependent.
After direct realization of the non-dual essence and empty nature, the mind can then have a direct glimpse of what is meant by being 'natural', otherwise there will always be a 'sense of contrivance'.
My 2 cents and have fun with your army life. 🙄
Edited by Thusness 12 Sep `10, 12:56PM"

Suggestions for Anatta Contemplation

Mr. A. J.:

Have you compiled a book or something to guide a person from I am to Anatta stages in a graded way?

Soh:

Hmm i'm outside now.. will reply your messages later

But i have a guide but its messy and long and still being edited

You can see if any pointers help

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/06/the-awakening-to-reality-practice-guide.html

Mr. A. J.:

Thanks Soh !

Thusness: ...To be more exact, the so called 'background' consciousness is that pristine happening. There is no a 'background' and a 'pristine happening'. During the initial phase of non-dual, there is still habitual attempt to 'fix' this imaginary split that does not exist. It matures when we realized that anatta is a seal, not a stage; in hearing, always only sounds; in seeing always only colors, shapes and forms; in thinking, always only thoughts. Always and already so. -:)

This is beautiful. This is exactly what I am realizing.

Soh:

Are you doubtless about this yet?

Mr. A. J.:
I mean I am not in disagreement with this experience. I have an intuition of this and I would like to mature this and stabilize in this experience.
I was wondering about the methodology. Should it be only contemplation or is there some inquiry approach that can work along with contemplation.

Soh:

i see. you can do a little case study... lol. since you have the time, it might be good to go through these. a good thing about atr is that so far, many people who came across our group and blog has realised anatta. i estimate about 40 people. so i have collected some of their writings and even requested some to write a little.

from all these cases, you can see that some of them have slightly different trigger points. you can look into them and see what is their inquiry and contemplations that triggered the shift of insight for me. for me it is a sort of experiential contemplation or inquiry into the nature of 'consciousness' through bahiya sutta.

for john tan it was the two stanzas of anatta -- https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html

for me, slightly different, although not all that different, it was through contemplating on bahiya sutta to penetrate the subject-action-object dichotomy -- https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/10/my-commentary-on-bahiya-sutta.html , https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/08/the-wind-is-blowing.html

for ajahn amaro i think it is also bahiya sutta - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html , https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/the-breakthrough.html

for soto zen priest and teacher alex r. weith, it is through bahiya sutta - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/10/a-zen-exploration-of-bahiya-sutta.html

i think you will like the approach of kyle dixon, because he approaches deconstruction and contemplation from many angles even quite early on, not just from the aspect of anatta, which is why he penetrated into twofold emptiness pretty quickly, so, highly recommended reading - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/03/a-sun-that-never-sets.html and https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2014/10/advise-from-kyle_10.html - you can see that he actually also integrated a little bit of his insights from Madhyamika, DP, j krishnamurti, alan watts etc along with AtR, dzogchen, all into it

for nafis rahman the most recent to breakthrough to anatta, it was through triggered while contemplating on two books which was recommended by atr/myself - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/10/nafis-rahmans-

breakthrough-to-anatta.html

for joel agee , reading a verse on dzogchen triggered the insight - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2013/09/joel-agee-appearances-are-self_1.html

for td unmanifest, its the two nondual contemplations in the atr guide and zen master dogen's uji that led to his insights - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/07/breakthroughs-to-anatta.html
kyle dixon is very clear about view and realization and experience are clear.. he practices dzogchen and his teacher Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith is also clear. might want to read this on madhyamika, will help: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/06/choosing.html and https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2019/10/investigation-into-movement.html

btw Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith is teaching dzogchen in two weeks, an online course. if you're interested you can join his group and check out: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2020/09/buddhahood-in-this-life-great.html

Mr. A. J.:

Thank you so much Soh ! That's quite a wealth of material. I'll surely go through all this and find my way 🙂

Thanks indeed !

Labels: Anatta |

Questions

Question: “Isn't phase 4 name (mirror) slightly misleading, since a mirror-like mind is more associated with the I AM?”

Reply by Soh: “Someone at I AM will sometimes talk about being a mirror too, but as a background Witness.

One Mind is definitely always talking about mirror (you will almost certainly see this description or analogy in one form or another from someone who realizes One Mind), but as a one-way dependency (as opposed to the two-way dependency described by Greg Goode here) and merely a union or inseparability in terms of non-division. Reflections depend on and is not other than mirror, but mirror is not reflections.

There was a young kid who realized I AM and One Mind at the age of 17. I was just reminded of him.

He wrote: "Some people may perceive all of this as something deeply mysterious beyond the scope of their own capacities. It is not. It is simple and plain living, and nothing mysterious about it. Do not imagine that this unconditioned awareness is somehow apart from the world and daily life. On the contrary, it could be said that one is even more closer to life than ever before, because there is no separation between you and the world. When caught up in dualism, one creates the

illusion of someone being aware (subject) and something to be aware of (object). Yet there is just this awareness, there is nothing to be aware of. Conditioned phenomena are not apart from awareness in any way, yet they not really awareness either.

Perhaps the best way to describe this is to use the analogy of a mirror, the unconditioned awareness being the mirror and conditioned phenomena beings images reflected in the mirror. The mirror doesn't change because reflections arise. It does not dwell upon the reflections, yet the reflections exists nowhere apart from the mirror. They are the mirror, yet the mirror isn't the reflections."

- http://the-wanderling.com/cyber-sangha.html

This is a perfect description of John Tan/Thusness Stage 4.

Another similar analogy in One Mind is sky and clouds. Inseparable yet not the same. (And yet, this analogy might be used even at I AM phase - the sky being taken to be the formless dissociated background)."

One Mind and No Mind is in Stage 4, however, one can also access One Mind and No Mind in Stage 0 as a peak experience (i.e. no permanent realizations). No mind is similar to PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience - see Glossary).

Sam wrote:
Oct 24, 2018, 10:45:00 AM
I think I am clear on difference between no mind and one mind. But I am still not clear about how no mind is different from Anatta. Does not Anatta already imply no mind and vice versa?

Soh replied:
Oct 24, 2018, 7:02:00 PM
In no-mind, the sense of a background Self, awareness, seer, hearer, is gone and instead the awareness is just the sound, the sight, the everything.

But it can just be a peak experience. Means, the sense of Self/background can be dissolved momentarily and returns later on. Having an experience where sense of self and background dissolves temporarily is not the same as having an insight that there never actually was an Agent/Background.

Anatta is a dharma seal, a 'truth' of what is always already the case. No-mind becomes effortless after anatta realization.

For Anatta realization, it is suddenly realized that in seeing there's always only the seen with no seer, in hearing there's always only the heard with no hearer, and same for all other senses. Until it is suddenly realized that the whole structure of Seer-Seeing-Seen doesn't apply and there is no seeing besides colors -- no seer, no hearing besides sound -- no hearer, no awareness besides manifestation. This is not just realising the lack of borders or duality but realizing the Absence of

an inherently existing Self/Agent/Awareness behind manifestation. It's seeing that the 'Background' never existed. This is the realization of anatta.

As I told Mr. J many years ago, “anatta is not just about nondual. but experience is implicitly nondual when anatta is seen. Anatta is a realization that there never was a seer or a seeing apart from seen, the manifestation. That is to say, one can have vivid nondual experience but there might not be clarity of insight. what is crucial or the key to effortless, natural and liberating experience is insight/realization - insight into the relationship of awareness and transience, until one realizes impermanence is buddha-nature.”

The 90 Days Cycle

John Tan often cautioned about the 90 day cycle to those who just had a breakthrough awakening into no-self. This refers to the intense non-dual luminous clarity and bliss that occurs for a period of 90 days after the initial breakthrough of some insights into no-self (could be phase 4 or phase 5 insight), only for it to become dull as karmic (deep conditioning) propensities return. Only after some periods of practice and deepening of insights does the experience become stabilized. The purpose of cautioning is so that one does not prematurely think that the experience has stabilized, and one should not be disheartened when some dullness or karmic propensities creep back. Simply continue practicing diligently and mature one’s insights even further.

“Thusness: Ok. Non-duality is a very very unique experience. One of the most unique experience I have ever had.

Participant 1: I think there are different levels of it right?

Thusness: Uh, there are different levels of it. The finer of experience and the not so fine, the initial level of experience. In the finest level of experience you will attain a sense of total transparency. It means when you were to touch the sand, you feel the sand, you feel everything. You ask, which aspect is not the Mind? You cannot answer. There is no in-between. There is just that.

Participant 1: How about the initial aspect?

Thusness: The initial aspect is this. The initial aspect is that there is a sudden realisation of non-duality. Then you will be in a stage of probably 60 to 90 days of bliss, of joy, or rapture. These things will happen first. Then, you will suddenly feel {inaudible} the momentum is coming to work. Now, this sudden {inaudible} of non-duality or the experience of non-duality will come again probably in {inaudible} even with practise. Because it will not just stop, but it will not just continuously surface. I mean it will continue to surface, but it will take place with the momentum, that you feel a bit confused. Can you get what I mean? But, if after certain time about two, three years of continuous practise and continuous experiencing it becomes stabilised. Then it becomes very clear. Then the experience of transparency will {inaudible}. And when you experience, a person will feel radiance bright. Means when you see him, you will find radiance bright, you know?

Participant 1: You mean this person see other person, radiance bright?

Thusness: Because once a person experience non-duality, there is no holding, there is just luminosity. There is just a pure sense of existence, of clarity, of all things. Somehow, there is an utmost joy and energy that flows from everywhere, that sustains a person. This is its nature."

- John Tan, 2007, Transcript of Lankavatara Sutra with Thusness 2007

"Most intense is anatta, explosion of luminous intensity into 3 states (waking, dreaming, deep sleep) into meditative experiences into 3 states and several episodes of dreams of clarity ... but even then never went beyond 90 days cycle... that's why I tell you always wait for 90 days cycle." - John Tan

"In the 90-days cycle, different experiences can manifest depending on the depth of intensities. It is also best and easiest to witness all sort of phenomena in the first 90 days cycle commonly described as intense meditative experiences. This is due to the powerful momentum from the breakthrough of insight at that moment. If he has strong base of meditation previously, the effect is sort of "multiplied".

The first factor is the "willingness" to let go. Surrendering is thorough. The release is thorough. Therefore second factor is energy release. There is tremendous energy that is previously held up and tied up in preserving the "I" is now released. The mind and body constructs dropped and practitioner feels "light". Fearlessness is third factor. The intensity of clarity due to directness of perception is fourth factor.

All these factors serve as the conditions that intensifies the 6 entries and exits.

Whether energy turn oceanic-wave like pattern or sensations turns crystal and transparent is experienced or surrendering leading to mind state ceased, they are all A&P.

Test is whether the factors can penetrate into the 3 states and whether unconscious dreams manifest karmic tendencies or dreams of clarity or dreamless clarity.

Also diet is an important factor that is often overlooked. Anyway we are not teachers, so don't anyhow advice and mislead." - John Tan, 2017

Mr. K wrote in 2012,

"I wanted to ask you, my most shocking and powerful
> experience so far was anatta in the theme of that first stanza thusness wrote:
> There is thinking, no thinker, There is hearing, no hearer, There is seeing,
> no seer. It actually came on suddenly one day and it was intensely profound

> for me, brought me to tears... in that experience thought actually cut out
> completely as if it was buried... and I unknowingly forced it to come back so
> I could jot down mental notes on the experience which were actually exactly
> the same as his stanza, seeing no seer, hearing no hearer, experience IS...
> however it also tapered off, even though I know now that is the nature of
> experience even now. But I too have sunk back into this substantialist here
> and now, much like you mentioned happened after your initial realization of
> anatta... was your initial realization of anatta a powerful experience which
> tapered off?

....

>> Yea I've been envolved with ChNNs dzogchen community for about 4 years now...
>> I started off there, had no knowledge of anything "spiritual" prior to that..
>> Had an older dude take my friend and I under his wing around that time too
>> which was helpful. And he had good insight about practices and stories but as
>> for peak experiences and what to look for and their implications he isn't so
>> knowledgeable. So I'm actually glad you messaged me and I've been able to
>> read your stuff because it's putting experiences which I previously had in
>> perspective with something to compare them to.
>>
>> So would you say the peak One Mind state where No Mind experiences
>> sporadically manifest is an essential prerequisite? Should that be the focus
>> to be having those "nyams" or experiences so that eventually the No Mind can
>> become stable? Or is it enough to just focus on the anatta as a seal like you
>> mentioned with that view? I'm glad you were able to put that peak experience
>> I mentioned into perspective. It was certainly intense, felt like I died, the
>> knowledge that there was absolutely no one here, and that there never ever
>> ever had been was so powerful, though there was no one there I actually felt
>> foolish for having conceived there to be a "subjective" entity at all, felt
>> as if I had been living a lie. So it was part beautiful but also part
>> crushing because I saw the fallacy of "me". It is still known now that the
>> sum conglomerate of aggregates coupled with timelessness does not produce an
>> entity, the illusion is still seen through. Though it doesn't have that
>> quality of pure experience. A level of "mastery" over thought manifestation
>> has been achieved too even though the notion that there is one apart from the
>> apparent stream of thought is ultimately illusory, thoughts are fairly quiet
>> and can be suspended on command, which I know can be helpful with seeing the
>> emptiness of the apparent sense fields and thought itself. I understand
>> there's nothing for "me" to get or figure out and that the object is to now
>> create a shift in perception fundamentally.
>>
>> What would be your advice? What should I be focusing on? Any help and
>> direction would be much appreciated I haven't had anyone to help me out with

>> this stuff for awhile now, because I can tell when someone I'm interacting
>> with doesn't understand, and I haven't come across anyone who really does,
>> but I can tell you do”

To which, John Tan replied on Mr. K, “Experience as I told you do tapered off after a 60-90 days period. This is because practitioners tend to focus on the experience rather than view after initial realization. Although he realizes the truth of anatta, the 'dualistic and inherent view' runs far deeper than what we think. But he will wake up one day and everything turns effortless and natural and it should be close. The part on the total exertion is still however lacking, there is still inner holding and lingering trace of "One Mind". :-)”

“Mindrolling Jetsun Khandro Rinpoche on Uprooting the Cancer of Ignorance

>As human beings, we struggle with basic ignorance. If you look at it from the cittamatrin perspective, the imprints of our basic ignorance are stored in the eighth consciousness, the alayavijnana. If you look at it from the madhyamika perspective, the causal consciousness is where our storehouse of basic ignorance remains steadfast. Whether at the level of alayavijnana or causal consciousness, as long as the imprint of samsara remains at the core of our mind, severing the ties and influence of duality will be very difficult.

>Even having glimpsed the indivisible nature of appearance-emptiness, if the seed of karmic imprint is still held at the level of basic consciousness, there is always room for doubt. There is always room for the causal consciousness to deviate from the basic fundamental nature. With continual separation between the fundamental nature and basic ignorance, wisdom and ignorance become two different things—and so wisdom decreases, while ignorance continues to manifest. Therefore ignorance must be uprooted.

>To uproot the cancer of ignorance, so to speak, from where it keeps coming back, you must not only have a glimpse of understanding of the indivisible-ness of appearance and emptiness; that view must be one-hundred percent strong. To take out all the poison, the severing of basic ignorance must be done thoroughly. Like performing surgery: to completely remove the cause of the disease, you must treat it like that.
>*— Mindrolling Jetsun Khandro Rinpoche*”

“(11:43 AM) Thusness: i read a post saying that after sometime, enlightenment becomes dull. and this is true until a form is emptiness is clearly experienced. forgotten. it becomes dull because isness, the clarity and intensity of no-self, non-dual oneness cannot be experienced. if there is clarity, spontaneity and aliveness, how can there be dullness. bear this in mind and relate it to the seven factors of enlightenment.” – John Tan, 2007

In addition to deepening one's insights, which is very important, all seven factors of enlightenment must be present with non-dual insight so that one can overcome our karmic (deep conditioning) momentum. So we should continue practicing diligently.

Was reminded of some conversations in 2007:

(10:48 PM) Thusness: now...not to underestimate all words we use. when we say 'sound', 'taste'... immediately these words and symbols carry meanings. they chain and link. they have imprints, therefore insight meditation is taught.

many underestimated the power of these 'bonds', prevent one from seeing... there is no true seeing... what are sensations? it is a word that carries certain meaning. when we say 'taste' is a form of sensation... immediately we are bonded though we think we know what we are talking about. we only think... we do not know... we do not know a lot of things.

when we practice, we are not practicing to attain the ultimate. there is nothing to attain. we only attempt to create conditions to experience certain aspect of our pristine awareness. when we put attention into mindfulness, into 'bare' attention. 'seeing' bare, we actually give up other aspect of our pristine awareness. that is the effortless spontaneity. so when someone teach mindfulness, he said put in effort to be bare in attention....he is not wrong. when some one said no no no, gentle effort in being mindfulness and be bare in attention, he is also not wrong. for all these paths are truly pathless. one that think he knows what is pathless doesn't really know. he thinks effortless is doing nothing, laze around, and when he act, he thought that is effort. it is a misunderstanding of a dualistic mind. 🙄

this is another tricky part of awareness. its all pervadingness. say that after you understand the 'Self' as everything, why need meditation, and dogen said, must meditate, even buddha meditate, and said though not necessary, still meditate. then said practice and enlightenment is one, that is pathless. neither do we do away with forms nor not forms

...

2007:

(9:54 PM) Thusness: I said that not for longchen only but also for because star might mistaken she understood Isness of longchen. why not the case of 'I AMness'? it must be the 2 conditions that is very very important. then the 7 factors of enlightenment will be experienced due to the clarity and spontaneity. Cannot settle for anything lesser than that.
(10:00 PM) AEN: steven norquist he hasnt experienced clarity and spontaneity?
(10:02 PM) Thusness: have but he doesn't know the factors...that is why i say retrogress a lil and improve on the degree of clarity on manifestation.
(10:03 PM) AEN: retrogress in what sense?
(10:03 PM) Thusness: means retreat a bit lah, don't always go forward. look at luminosity a lil...hehehe
(10:04 PM) AEN: oh you mean steven norquist focus too much on spontaneity and overlooked luminosity? luminosity will result in energy, etc?
(10:04 PM) Thusness: nope...he over extrapolate the meaning of spontaneity. he does not see the bond. that is non-dual only in perception, not in action. therefore he lacks the energy to engage in activities. I call the 'I' is gone but not the 'mine'. means there is clarity that there is no agent, but is unable to overcome the 'mine' aspect. action is still objective due to strong karmic hindrance. however this is often misunderstood...and i hope longchen doesn't. same applies to dharma dan.
(10:09 PM) AEN: icic
(10:09 PM) AEN: *misunderstood as what

(10:10 PM) Thusness: what i meant by doing nothing. that is why i said do not talk about self-liberation. you see i talked about it or not...
....
(4:38 PM) Thusness: your self enquiry is because you want to experience the 'I AM'. this is because you want to experience awareness. i mean the heartbeat. non dual until a certain level b4 entering pre-concious level. once you wake up while still on the bed, you are immediately just the manifestation. absolutely no background, right at the moment you awake. then crystal clarity of awareness as phenomenon.. awareness as 'forms' and 'things'. just the 'heart beats'. super duper clear, not absorption. it must be a form of realisation, continuously uninterrupted. at the beginning b4 this, just spontaneous arising will be experienced. then the 2 must fused into one. complete clarity of one spontaneous happening. means clarity and spontaneity might not be able to fuse yet
(4:44 PM) AEN: so you mean you can experience spontaneity without clarity?
(4:44 PM) Thusness: like treat everything as yuan... all is empty...just the arising of conditions, yet the luminosity of awareness is still not there. so there is no true understanding of it as our nature like no-self. so don't anyhow go say [Soh: prematurely discuss about] self-liberation, spontaneity...etc"
More on the seven factors of enlightenment:

“SN 46.14
PTS: S v 79
CDB ii 1580
Gilana Sutta: Ill
(Factors of Enlightenment)
translated from the Pali by
Piyadassi Thera
© 1999
Alternate translation: Thanissaro

Thus have I heard:

On one occasion the Blessed One was living near Rajagaha, in the bamboo grove, in the Squirrels' feeding ground. At that time the Venerable Maha Kassapa who was living in the Pipphali Cave, was afflicted with a disease, was suffering therefrom, and was gravely ill.

Then the Blessed One arising from his solitude at eventide visited the Venerable Maha Kassapa and sat down on a seat made ready (for him). Thus seated the Blessed One spoke to the Venerable Maha Kassapa:

"Well Kassapa, how is it with you? Are you bearing up, are you enduring (your suffering)? Do your pains decrease or increase? Are there signs of your pains decreasing and not of increasing?"

"No, Ven. Sir, I am not bearing up, I am not enduring, the pain is very great. There is a sign not of pains decreasing but of their increasing."

"Kassapa, these seven factors of enlightenment are well expounded by me and are cultivated and fully developed by me. They conduce to perfect understanding, to full realization (of the four Noble Truths) and to Nibbana. What are the seven?

i. "Mindfulness, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

ii. "Investigation of the Dhamma, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

iii. "Persevering effort, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

iv. "Rapture, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

v. "Calm, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

vi. "Concentration, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

vii. "Equanimity, the factor of enlightenment, Kassapa, is well expounded by me, and is cultivated and fully developed by me. It conduces to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana.

"These seven factors of enlightenment, Kassapa, are well expounded by me and are cultivated and fully developed by me. They conduce to perfect understanding, to full realization and to Nibbana."

"Most assuredly, O Blessed One, they are factor of enlightenment. Most assuredly, O Welcome Being (Sugata), they are factors of enlightenment."

Thus said the Buddha, and the Venerable Maha Kassapa glad at heart approved the utterances of the Buddha. Thereupon the Venerable Kassapa recovered from that affliction, and that affliction, of the Venerable Kassapa disappeared."

On a sidenote of the sutta above, it is truly possible that the seven factors of enlightenment can miraculously relieve the physical discomforts of bodily pain and illness.

As Soh said in 2021, "What JT said about psychological suffering released with the release of self/Self and breathing [in the comments section of https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html] is very true, also I would add, even physical discomfort can be released in some ways (since mind and body are inseparable).
Yesterday i felt a little uncomfortable and groggy after i woke up from nap in the evening but then with mindfulness i totally just zoomed into bodily sensations and no self and entered into a very embodied state like as the very fabric of

sensation and forms and then it seems like a subtle veil just released and it becomes very clear and wonderful.. the discomfort or feelings just miraculously dissolved into simply a mere state of perfection. Today I felt clearer and cleaner as well.
As JT said, "Yes spending some quality time like this is always important."”

John Tan said in 2006, “<^john^> how to overcome pain, sensation is different from pain
<^john^> in fact, your master would want to experience that pure sensation resulting for differing condition. but one should not over do it. :)
<Presence> huh? what do you mean
<^john^> consciousness is often treated as self. do you know that?
<Presence> ya
<^john^> hear the sound outside, what is that?
<Presence> consciousness?
<^john^> yes, and it is self according to vedas. if not because of the doctrine of anatta and emptiness. one will overlook our emptiness nature. so a practitioner will want to experience it
<Presence> want to experience wat? pain?
<^john^> the sound, following every single detail, the minutest details. not the pain, the sensation. even when in pain. he/she has not much here. it is another dimension of consciousness. but only to a certain degree. even with practice
<Presence> oic certain degree of? details ?
<^john^> though the sensation is different, it doesn't mean he/she will not break hor.

no noticing details is different... that is why when one enter the realm of no-self, he automatically develop insight. finding himself everywhere in everything. the color, the fabric, the texture...etc. then through the seed of emptiness, it realises in addition of no-self, the meaning of emptiness. this is the nature of consciousness, the nature is so. then luminosity and emptiness fuses into one however the clarity will reach a level and then blockage. you know why?
<Presence> karmic propensities
<^john^> :) yes..fetters. however you can penetrate using concentration. but that is only temporary. one is always tempted initially to do what your teacher did. sensing, sensing and more subtle sensing. :) that is not the way. to penetrate into deeper depth, we have to use another way. :) you know how painful it is for one that suffered from slipped disc to do stretching? a person is considered to suffered from slipped disc if he felt the extreme pain when he raised his leg above ground about half a feet when lying flat. :) i tried overcoming it till my jin mai changes position. :P
<Presence> wah how you 'overcome'
<^john^> the doctor when x-ray out also dunno how come i can do it.
<Presence> lol then how you do it :P
<^john^> sensing into the minutest details enable us to slowly change it. :)
<Presence> icic.. but you said its not so good to want to keep sensing or something ?
<^john^> that is why i tell you only the beginning stage. :) the correct environment is crucial to progress further.
<Presence> but wait isnt sensing the details like vipassana?
<^john^> yes

<Presence> oic then how?
<^john^> what is the other form of meditation?
<Presence> shamatha [calm abiding]
<^john^> :) we need complement."

How do we develop the 7 factors of enlightenment? Through the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness, which the Buddha said was the only way to liberation. He also assures that practitioners developing the four foundations of mindfulness can expect to attain the high levels of awakening such as non-returner or arahantship in 7 years or as little as 7 days. So check out Satipatthana Sutta - https://plumvillage.org/sutra/discourse-on-the-four-establishments-of-mindfulness/ and also the Anapansati Sutta - https://plumvillage.org/sutra/discourse-on-the-full-awareness-of-breathing/

Anapansati – Mindfulness of Breathing – is recommendable and in it the Buddha taught that it develops the four foundations of mindfulness which in turn develops the seven factors of awakening.

"John TanSunday, February 22, 2015 at 11:52am UTC+08

There is the active and passive mode [of no-self]. In the active mode, what is the role of attention in selflessness. Means don't be afraid of attention but see the role of intention in the seamless activity of functioning and in actioning. How the sense of self that causes duality between the self and action gets dissolved even in the simply activity of chanting or breathing exercise."

It should be noted that although the karmic tendencies may return after an initial breakthrough, the experience does eventually become stabilized with further practice and the deepening of insight. As John Tan has reported, he hasn't had the slightest trace of subject/object division or sense of agency for the past 20+ years after awakening to anatta, and Soh likewise reports to be the same for the past 8 years.

"When a person sees so clearly (by insight), one will surely enter a time 60-90 days, then suddenly its (duality comes back?). when I first saw it, I understood very very clearly. But he (referring to Soh) is unique, his is after dunnu how many months it becomes (effortless). For me, after a few years I still cannot [overcome the bond]. Then one day I see someone playing basketball, I closed my eye, I hear the sound of basketball, then he bounce the ball bum bum bum, then suddenly the body mind just drop. then when he bounce the basketball it feels like its my heart beat. thats (?). there's only that sound. bum bum bum. then when they open the door, the whole vibration... when the mrt goes through... (sound) vrooom, only that sound. then I wondered, why just now I cannot enter, then suddenly I have such complete perfect experience, what is the difference? Why just now can, now cannot, then now can, just now cannot? what is disturbing the clarity? so I go through mentally the past experience. I saw someone playing basketball, I kept seeing, then I closed my eyes, only the sound, then mind body drop, then only the sound, the ball sound hitting the ground is like hitting me, that feeling, thats the experience of anatta. the 'ping pong' sound is like beating you. That time I suddenly entered into the experience of no mind, while anatta has a penetrating insight where the bond is released. (?) from just now, then suddenly the experience, the main ? what is the cause, what is the primary cause, for this entire experience to

arise. I kept asking. Why this happens? then I understood that experience is not the same as insight. so you can have the experience, then the penetrating insight that sees through clearly that (?). experience is not insight. when insight comes then you will know, then it becomes natural. Insight into anatta is the realization that there is no self. What that is being described like you (Mr. C) said, is an experience. but once you penetrate the insight then this is the experience. going further, after you see no self, then why do you (?) understand dependent origination? how this experience of total exertion, (?) relates with your view. (to me) now you shld have such experiences intermittently, mini ones. It will always come and then (?). until one day, that bond itself is totally gone. the idea that there is no self, the penetrating insight, it has the anatta experience does not necessarily mean that you have not (?) this bond of dependency, to understand independent of ? is also (?). therefore this feeling of total exertion never (comes about)? I realize there is the experience, when I hear the basketball, so I realize that there is an experience, and there is the penetrating insight that you see clearly then the experience becomes normal. but the penetrating insight (of anatta) itself does not include deep total exertion. (theres) some other experience, some other kind of insight that you have to penetrate. the bond is still there. that is why you come to phase 6. .. the hindrance.. like anatta experience, very normal.

Why sometimes for example you, like now, after anatta insight your experience becomes very clear right? But you are only getting very mini, like mini, like suddenly you become total activity, sometimes? On and off right? Why? So this tells us that there is this bond that you have not penetrated. I'm also the same until few years ago, I told you right, it is like that one. You have to penetrate through insight, then you see, then the experience of total exertion will come. Understand? This is not saying this state is higher or what. This bond (?) (there is no strict linear way) how it happens first. (Just that) When you release this bond, this experience will come. So the other two is (?) whatever arises, releases you. These are the three experiences that the entire (?) and the realization of it is important. It is not saying you see emptiness then it is higher than total exertion and if you see total exertion it is higher than anatta. It is seeing this bond (?) and clearly (?) so that you cannot understand. This bond to consciousness is the most important thing. Means that consciousness is like a kind of (?) hypnotism.

Do you know there is this person that does mind reading (?). He ask someone to look at three cards - a circle, a triangle, and a square. And that person sees, and he says you see this by yourself these three cards right? What are they? The person replies – a circle (?), a rectangle, and a square. And he says are you very very sure? Yes I'm very sure! And he shows the three cards, and (?) eh? Its impossible (?) it was a rectangle

So consciousness is like that. It is just like when you conceive duality, subject and object, you will have no way of breaking through. It is like when someone plant a (?) inside, you cannot break through. It is a magical spell. You are unable to penetrate. ignorance itself implies deep, ignorance implies something that is very very deep. That has always been like that. Understand? So it takes many many years, just to break this simple little thing that is ? ignorance. It is just like this only. It is like me asking Mr. J, despite his 30 years of practice and he said it is nothing new, and yet it is something very very valuable. It is 30 years! Life has how many 30 years? To consciousness, that is the most important thing. You understand?" - Transcript with Thusness 2012 - Group Gathering

Pitfalls and Dangers of One Mind

At the One Mind phase, there is still the reification of an unchanging consciousness, and for some an unchanging and universal consciousness. The pitfalls of the One Mind phase can also be present in the I Am phase, as explained in the chapter on reifying Host and Guest (in One Mind, the Host is now seen to subsume all Guests and be inseparable with them, instead of being absolutely distinct and separate from them as in the I AM phase, however the Host is still as Absolute and Unchanging).

“This [phase 4] is the beginning of seeing through no-self. Insight into no-self has arisen but non-dual experience is still very much 'Brahman' rather than 'Sunyata'; in fact it is more Brahman than ever. Now "I AMness" is experienced in All.

Nevertheless it is a very important key phase where the practitioner experiences a quantum leap in perception untying the dualistic knot. This is also the key insight leading to the realization that "All is Mind", all is just this One Reality.

The tendency to extrapolate an Ultimate Reality or Universal Consciousness where we are part of this Reality remains surprisingly strong. Effectively the dualistic knot is gone but the bond of seeing things inherently isn't. 'Dualistic' and 'inherent' knots that prevent the full experiencing of our Maha, empty and non-dual nature of pristine awareness are two very different 'perceptual spells' that blind.

The subsection "On Second Stanza" of the post "On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection" further elaborates this insight.” - John Tan, 2009

▫ Soh Wei Yu
Admin
May also need to point out at the I AM and one mind phase, not to deepen the tendencies of reifying unchanging awareness too much (the two pitfalls - unchanging host/guest and universal awareness) but move on in the correct direction of the four aspects, two stanzas and two nondual contemplations.
excerpt from https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../i-am...
Session Start: Wednesday, February 11, 2009
(6:35 PM) AEN: http://dharmaoverground.wetpaint.com/.../Sharing+like.....
looking foward to hearing the discussion 😛
(6:49 PM) AEN:
When self becomes more and more transparent,
Likewise phenomena become more and more luminous.
In thorough transparency all happening are pristinely and vividly clear.
Obviousness throughout, aliveness everywhere!
this became apparent to me just now
(6:49 PM) AEN: the more the self disappears the more everything manifest its clearness

(6:50 PM) AEN: and naturalness
(6:51 PM) AEN: and spaciousness... but spaciousness is not like void.. but the more spacious the more clear everything is..
(6:56 PM) AEN: today im surprisingly awake even though i only slept 2 hours
(6:57 PM) AEN: btw posted something on buddhism and taoism here:
http://www.sgclub.com/sing.../difference_between_127679.html
its after i wrote this then i search the internet for something then found the zisirum blog
(6:58 PM) AEN: but i tink my post is too chim for the person 😀
(12:56 AM) Thusness: don't deviate from the path
i wrote in the forum
(12:57 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:58 AM) Thusness: whatever you experienced is already this way, when you continue you are only enhancing the imprints and ignorance
(12:59 AM) Thusness: if you are unable to get out now, do you think you are able to get out after continuously re-enforcing your imprints?
all actions leaves imprints
(12:59 AM) AEN: icic..
(1:00 AM) Thusness: observe your thoughts, see is there any agent
truly experience it
(1:01 AM) Thusness: if you see, you are naturally non-dual
(1:01 AM) AEN: oic..
(1:01 AM) Thusness: so why is there a need to go a big round and ended up with all wrong views?
(1:02 AM) Thusness: if there is no self, you are already most direct...where is there a need to be non-dual
if you don
(1:02 AM) Thusness: if you don't understand propensities, you will never know how it blinds u
(1:02 AM) AEN: icic..
(1:04 AM) Thusness: yet even anatta, you will still not understand DO. If you are lucky, it takes you 3-5 years to have your divided consciousness view being replaced.
if you are unlucky, it can take you lives.
(1:04 AM) AEN: oic..
(1:05 AM) Thusness: it is very difficult to have permanent lucidity and you should start from now.
(1:05 AM) Thusness: i m not belittling your teacher, but she is not there yet even at this age
(1:05 AM) Thusness: do you think you have that dedication and sincerity like her in practice?
(1:06 AM) AEN: no
(1:06 AM) Thusness: so don't continue to enhance urself with wrong understanding
(1:06 AM) AEN: oic..
(1:07 AM) Thusness: rather after having the views, practice to have these views be authenticated in actual experience.
(1:07 AM) Thusness: when realise anatta, there will be a period to get accustomed to sync your views with experience

(1:08 AM) Thusness: it is not easy to do that
(1:08 AM) Thusness: yet it is very important because we don't know consciousness
(1:09 AM) Thusness: in additions to non dual and emptiness, you must experience imprints
(1:09 AM) Thusness: and to have the right understanding, it can take you entire life
(1:09 AM) AEN: icic..
(1:10 AM) Thusness: if you practice like that of the advaita, you will not even talk about imprints and dispositions
(1:10 AM) Thusness: you do not know what is spontaneous arising in terms of dependent origination
u cannot know what is intention

- · 13m

□ Soh Wei Yu
Admin
The natural tendency will be to continue getting stuck and fixating on the unchanging/universal which is a form of reification and delusion. Without these pointers I will get stuck in these phases (1 to 4) for much longer.

- · 11m

□ Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Means its good and important to have direct realization and taste of the luminosity and its nondual aspect but not to get stuck in it for years by focusing wrongly.
□ · 1m

Be careful of stagnating waters (this can also present itself in even earlier phases than one mind), as the Soto Zen teacher Alex R. Weith wrote:

A Zen Exploration of the Bahiya Sutta

“There is no end to the process of awakening, but in Zen Buddhism there are steps and strategies. These introductory posts will explain my position, what I discovered so far, and how it unfolds.

Having got hold of the ox, one has realized the One Mind. In Zen literature this One Mind has often been compared to a bright mirror that reflects phenomena and yet remains untouched by appearances. As discussed with one of Sheng-yen's first Western students, this One Mind is still an illusion. One is not anymore identified to the self-center, ego and personality, yet one (the man) is still holding to pure non-dual awareness (the ox). Having tamed the ox, the ox-herder must let go of the ox (ox forgotten) and then forget himself and the ox (ox and man forgotten).

The problem is that we still maintain a subtle duality between what we know ourself to be, a pure non-dual awareness that is not a thing, and our daily existence often marked by self-contractions. Hoping to get more and more identified with pure non-dual awareness, we may train concentration, try to hold on to the event of awakening reifying an experience, or rationalize the whole thing to conclude that self-contraction is not a problem and that suffering is not suffering because our true nature is ultimately beyond suffering. This explains why I got stuck in what Zen calls "stagnating waters" for about a year.

This is however not seen as a problem in other traditions such as Advaita Vedanta where the One Mind is identified with the Brahman that contains and manifests the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep within itself, yet remains untouched by its dreamlike manifestation."

Question: "When you say that many teachers are stuck at I AM and ONE MIND, what do those teachers reify? Since usually in Buddhism, contrary to Vedanta, there isn't a single consciousness, what is it that they subsume everything into? I ask this because I'm interested in seeing the 4 stage model (I AM, ONE MIND, ANATTA, SHUNYATA) from an exclusively Buddhist point of view, instead of an hybrid of Vedanta and Buddhism."

Soh's reply:

"Depends. I have seen many Buddhist teachers reify I AM, many reify One Mind, while some have realised anatta and emptiness.

By the way it is not necessary to get stuck with a belief in universal consciousness to get stuck at I AM or one mind. Even non Buddhist systems like Samkhya is about I AM but each I AM is individual. And as I wrote in AtR guide there are different phases of I AM - those who gone through impersonality are more prone to reifying the universal, until insight into anatta arise at least. I would try to avoid naming names of Buddhist masters here as it is a sensitive topic.. but for example, people like Judith Blackstone (I don't think there are students of Judith Blackstone here? Haha) are stuck at One Mind without a belief in universal consciousness - she accepts that it is an extrapolation that cannot be confirmed experientially whether nondual consciousness is universal and says she does not hold this belief afaik but she is certainly at the one mind phase. Means unchanging undivided consciousness subsuming all changing phenomena.

I have seen many Theravadin, Zen and Tibetan masters and teachers reify universal awareness.

I reckon so many Chan/Zen teachers conceive a universal consciousness partly due to doctrinal influence. For example the The Awakening of Faith in Mahayana of Ashvagosha talks about One Mind and that text has been criticised by Lopon Malcolm to be holding a view similar to Advaita Vedanta but this text is usually taken as authoritative in Chinese Buddhism, and even Huang Po talks about One Mind in a way that sounds like that or is often interpreted that way, e.g. "All the Buddhas and all sentient beings are nothing but the One Mind, beside which nothing exists. The One Mind alone is the Buddha, and there is no distinction between the Buddha and sentient beings." Of course, there are those like Dogen that re-interpretes One Mind in a way that makes it congruent with anatta. And Soto Zen masters

like Steve Hagen are very clear about anatta, his use of the term is congruent with anatta, “This Mind is nothing other than the Whole. It's simply thus, the fabric of the world itself - the ongoing arising and falling away that are matter, energy and events.”

But that is not the case for most. I have seen many teachers of Chinese Buddhism who hold the view of universal awareness from I AM to one mind. It is an influence of the 宇宙本体论 (doctrine of universal substratum). There is a text also taken as authoritative in Chinese Buddhism, 宇宙万有本体论, although I am not sure if it is a substantialist text (have not studied it).

In Tibetan Buddhism side, I have seen a few masters (although more infrequently than Chinese Buddhism) elude to universal awareness, but generally even if they do not, they often still reify an unchanging awareness that is one’s innermost essence. Meaning I AM is reified like an unchanging background of pure awareness, or one mind subsuming all phenomena. The sky and clouds, mirror and reflections that AtR talks about in the one mind chapter often gets reified, that is very common. I have seen many Tibetan books just talking about I AM, some one mind, etc. It is rare even in Tibetan Buddhism today (but this applies to any tradition) to break through to no mirror and anatta and emptiness, but as I mentioned there are some. Then as for Thai Forest Theravada, as I mentioned many get stuck at Poo Roo (Witness) and one master that broke through that got stuck at one mind. It is very common in awareness teachings to get stuck there. Therefore, the Thusness 7 stages can help and do apply to all traditions, whatever tradition one is following so that one has a clearer direction and can avoid the pitfalls.”

STAGE 5: No Mirror Reflecting (“Anatta / No-Self / Firstfold Emptiness”)

“There is no mirror reflecting
All along manifestation alone is.
The one hand claps
Everything IS!”
- John Tan, 2006

“But what exactly is this “witness” we are talking about? It is the manifestation itself! It is the appearance itself! There is no Source to fall back, the Appearance is the Source! Including the moment to moment of thoughts. The problem is we choose, but all is really it. There is nothing to choose.

There is no mirror reflecting
Manifestation alone IS.

From blinking your eyes, raising a hand...jumps...flowers, sky, chirping birds, footsteps...every single moment...nothing is not it! There is just IT. The instantaneous moment is total intelligence, total life, total clarity. Everything Knows, it's it. There is no two, there is one.”
- John Tan, 2006
More details: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../thusnesss-six...

“If the experience is like a mirror reflecting, then it is not emptiness of self.” - John Tan, 2008

“The 'bond' is greatly loosen after "no mirror reflecting". During the process of transition from 'Witness' to 'no Witness' some experience the manifestation as itself being intelligence, some experience it as immense vitality, some experience it as tremendous clarity and some, all 3 qualities explode into one single moment. Even then the 'bond' is far from being completely eliminated, we know how subtle it can be 🙂. The principle of conditionality might help if you face problem in future (I know how a person feel after the experience of non-duality, they don't like 'religion'... 😀 Just simply 4 sentences).

When there is this, that is.
With the arising of this, that arises.
When this is not, neither is that.
With the cessation of this, that ceases.

Not for scientists, more crucial for the experience of the totality of our Pristine Awareness. 😀” – John Tan to Din, 2006

"**We are not trying to merge knower and known!**

To someone transitioning from I AM to nondual (only begun talking with him yesterday), I pointed out anatta to him a few moments ago, I have a feeling he will breakthrough to anatta soon:

Mr. C:

“The transience itself rolls and knows”...that is awesome. It pulled me into a more clear state when I first read it and again just now. This was the right thing to resend:)

Soh:

yes and its always already so! like when we say.. fire is burning... its totally an illusion if you imagine fire is something 'behind' burning, or fire is the 'agent' or 'watcher' of burning. thats ridiculous isnt it?

and yet we imagine 'awareness' was something behind 'transience'

its the same

fire is just the burning, fire is not 'doing' the burning

lightning flash -- lightning is the flasher? no. lightning is just another word for flash. lightning is flashing is just another way of saying 'flashing is happening'.

thunder roars -- thunder is the agent of roaring? no. thunder is just roar. wind blows? wind is just blowing. seeing sees scenery? seeing is just colors, no seer. hearing hears sounds? actually, hearing is only ever sound, never been a hearer. always already so.

thats why realisation is so important, you must see through the delusion that it never was like that

its not that you merge fire and burning, its not that you are trying to merge lightning with the flash, its not that you are trying to merge wind with the blowing. it is not that we are trying to merge knower and known. its to realise both are never valid in themselves in the first place, both poles are non-arisen.

as i sent someone a few moments ago:

"like how krodha/kyle dixon described:

"'Self luminous' and 'self knowing' are concepts which are used to convey the absence of a subjective reference point which is mediating the manifestation of appearance. Instead of a subjective cognition or knower which is 'illuminating' objective appearances, it is realized that the sheer exertion of our cognition has always and only been the sheer exertion of appearance itself. Or rather that cognition and appearance are not valid as anything in themselves. Since both are merely fabricated qualities neither can be validated or found when sought. This is not a union of subject and object, but is the recognition that the subject and object never arose in the first place [advaya]. ", "The cognition is empty. That is what it means to recognize the nature of mind [sems nyid]. The clarity [cognition] of mind is recognized to be empty, which is sometimes parsed as the inseparability of clarity and emptiness, or nondual clarity and emptiness.""

Labels: Anatta 0 comments | | "

Recommended reading: Beyond Awareness by Andre A. Pais
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/11/beyond-awareness.html

“In stage 4, reflections are seen to be the mirror (perhaps as a modulation of the mirror), but the mirror is not seen as merely reflections. Mirror (Awareness) is mistaken to be unchanging, but inseparable from the changing reflections. This is a false inherent view. Therefore Stage 4 is called Mirror Bright but Stage 5 is No Mirror Reflecting.

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/09/difference-between-thusness-stage-4-and.html

Stage 5 must break down the view of eternalism. There is no unchanging Mirror that is separate from (like the I AM/Eternal Witness phase), or *even one with* reflections (like Stage 4/substantial nondualism). Reflections alone is the mirror(ing) Presence(-ing) without a mirror-er. There is no agent, no source, no perceiver, doer, controller, thinker,

hearer, seer, etc. (First stanza) And not only that, seeing is just colors, no seeing, hearing is just sounds, no hearing. (Second stanza). And this means even the I AM/Formless Mind Presence/Subtle Clear Light that dawns at death, etc, is just another reflection/manifestation/empty appearance without being a reflector. Presencing is always just appearance after appearance. There is absolutely no substratum, no ground, nothing behind appearance whatsoever.

Stage 5 is not just nondualism because one may end up in substantialist nondual (Stage 4). Stage 5 is non-substantialist or non-essentialist nondual.” – Soh, 2021

“Unread post by PadmaVonSamba » Thu Dec 10, 2020 11:25 pm
If Nagarjuna had a mirror, would he say the mirror is a different mirror each time something different is reflected in it, or is it the same mirror?

Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith replied:
"Apart from what has been mirrored and not been mirrored, there is no [present] mirroring. A mirroring mirror is redundant, just like moving movers." - https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=116&t=35353&p=561739 - p561739https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=66&t=35336&p=561377#p561377

(Also check out this great thread on moving movers: Choosing)

“I think we have to differentiate wisdom from an art or a state of mind.

In Master Sheng Yen’s death poem,

Busy with nothing till old. (无事忙中老)
In emptiness, there is weeping and laughing. (空里有哭笑)
Originally there never was any 'I'. (本来没有我)
Thus life and death can be cast aside. (生死皆可抛)

This "Originally there never was any 'I'" is wisdom and the dharma seal of anatta. It is neither an art like an artist in zone where self is dissolved into the flow of action nor is it a state to be achieved in the case of the taoist "坐忘" (sit and forget) -- a state of no-mind.

For example in cooking, there is no self that cooks, only the activity of cooking. The hands moves, the utensils act, the water boils, the potatoes peel and the universe sings together in the act of cooking. Whether one appears clumsy or smooth in act of cooking doesn't matter and when the dishes are out, they may still taste horrible; still there never was any "I" in any moment of the activity. There is no entry or exit point in the wisdom of anatta.”

Wrote years ago:

If someone talks about an experience he/she had and then lost it, that's not (the true, deep) awakening... As many teachers put it, it's the great samadhi without entry and exit.

John Tan: There is no entry and exit. Especially for no-self. Why is there no entry and exit?

Me (Soh): Anatta (no-self) is always so, not a stage to attain. So it's about realisation and shift of perception.

John Tan: Yes 👍

As John also used to say to someone else, "Insight that 'anatta' is a seal and not a stage must arise to further progress into the 'effortless' mode. That is, anatta is the ground of all experiences and has always been so, no I. In seeing, always only seen, in hearing always only sound and in thinking, always only thoughts. No effort required and never was there an 'I'."

15/4/13 12:53:28 AM: John Tan: Anatta is a realization that there isn't a consciousness besides sound, scenery...etc
15/4/13 12:56:15 AM: John Tan: You see through reification of that agent and get in touch with the base manifestation where the label rely upon
15/4/13 12:57:02 AM: John Tan: So sound is the actual consciousness is referring to
15/4/13 12:57:36 AM: John Tan: There is no consciousness other than that

[7:32 PM, 10/4/2020] John Tan: I am not against the idea of substratum as if there is nothing but the idea that apart from the on going appearances, there is truly existing "something" like a mirror and it's reflections.
[7:41 PM, 10/4/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I dont understand what you are not against
[7:42 PM, 10/4/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Substratum as nothingness is more like I AM right
[7:42 PM, 10/4/2020] John Tan: No
[7:42 PM, 10/4/2020] John Tan: Substratum is a convention
[7:47 PM, 10/4/2020] John Tan: It is like body and the dancing sensation I told andre. The substratum is just a convention for these ongoing appearances. It was expressed that way due to language structure.

<-- this is the realization that must arise with regards to 'consciousness' and 'subjectivity', that is called anatta realization.” – Soh, 2020

“Basically the difference between Thusness Stage 4 and Stage 5 is that in Stage 4, there is the view that awareness is the unchanging substance that can only experience itself in various forms and modulations.

Stage 5 is the realization that like lightning and flash (no lightning ever existed besides flash), wind and blowing (there is no wind besides blowing), there is simply no awareness besides manifestation, no seer-seeing-seen, agent-action dichotomy.. then from there one replaces one's view of a source, substratum, substance, and continue to penetrate into D.O., total exertion and emptiness.

...

Acharya Mahayogi Shridhar Rana Rinpoche said similarly about lightning and flashing -- there is no lightning besides flash except in language structure

The same applies to 'awareness' and 'senses/objects of awareness'

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../marshland-flowers...

Acharya: ‘Infact, since it is actually a process (this experience), tabling is going on is a more accurate finger to point at it. Now, if you had grown up with this grammtical sturcture, would the experience (and the grammatical structure) imply that there is a separate table (noun-object) from the act of seeing the table (verb)? And would the structure impose an 'I' upon the experience like imposing a separate lightning different from the flashing of the light? Is there a lightning separate from the flashing which does the flasing or is the flashing itself the lightning? But flashing is an action a verb, the lightning is a noun, an object. Or is the 'Light' distinct from the flasing created merely by the langauge? Likewise, is there an 'I' that sees or is the act of seeing specified by the Alice in Wonderland language 'Tabling' itself the 'I' the seer? But I is a pronoun, seer a noun and seeing/tabling are verbs. When I say 'I see', this is a seeing I. This 'I' is defined by the 'seeing'. Now there are two questions here.’” – Soh, 2021

“The basic nature has no nature. To negate the "inherentness" of nature is to directly see and taste the dynamism of one's empty clarity. To negate "color" as "no color" is to see and experience the rainbow of colours. There is no neutral state to hold on to, the neutral state is a state fabricated by the conceptual mind as that is the further it can go conceptually. If one tries to maintain a state of "neutrality" of neither this nor that, then he will be imobilized -- therefore no "no color". To be free is to fully open to whatever is, for whatever appears is just one's radiance clarity. Therefore anatta is a crucial experiential taste and insight.” – John Tan, 2021

“(8:40 PM) Thusness: it is very difficult to move from substantialist non-dual to anatta. even after arising insight of anatta, there is still this problem. very often you need to have clarity in DO to rid it...that is using DO to refine the experience of anatta. so when a person undergoes awareness practice until a certain phase (non-dual), it is very very important to keep instilling the right view, keep breaking the essence. for this, a certain amount of faith in the teacher is very important. otherwise one will not be able to progress to the next phase. even if you have undergone the experience, you will not be able to realize anatta, until practitioners realized that it is not necessary to have 'essence' at all...it is just simply a distorted view
(8:45 PM) AEN: the experience of D.O.?
(8:46 PM) Thusness: no anatta
(8:46 PM) AEN: oh icic. experience of anatta like a glimpse of no mind experience?
(8:46 PM) Thusness: yeah. like luckystrike... there is the experience of no mind. so for you, there must be willingness to let go of the 'wrong view' entirely, then with the experience of no-mind and realization, the adoption of the view carries you...until you perfect the experience. then the doubts is completely gone. your entire experience transcend the entire idea of 'essence'. the center is completely gone...just flat, disjoint, unsupported, dimensionless and pure experience, manifested as whatever arises. this is very important and must take note. otherwise you will not be able to advice correctly” – Conversation with John Tan, early 2011

“"View informing realization" means your underlying assumptions about mind and reality in general will more often than not, color your experiential insights. Realizations will conform to presuppositions.

Take the Advaitan who takes the passive knowing witness to be an ultimately substantial background substrate. That apparent attribute is assumed to be an unerring and unassailable characteristic of consciousness, and said practitioner will use that characteristic as an anchor in their practice, which will then be refined into its purest form as what the Advaitan considers to be their ultimate purusa.

For Buddhists, that same characteristic (revered by the Advaitan) is considered to be an afflictive byproduct of delusion. It is seen as faulty, ultimately erroneous and an obscuration. Jigme Lingpa, for example, states that those who mistake that substrate and its strata as definitive and something to be cultivated are "like blind men wandering in the desert without a guide."

Thus, even inferentially, our view can influence the way our path unfolds and will then lead to a different result.

...

*Spelare wrote: ↑Wed May 23, 2018 5:46 am*But is it not equally true that our experiential insights may lead us to revise or abandon previously held views?

Kyle: Sometimes, sure.

However there are also cases where the paths we become involved with either (i) experientially cultivate the very assumptions we enter them with, or (ii) experientially cultivate the assumptions we are taught.

And so "right view" becomes important.

...

It is possible for initial awakening to occur without a support system, but no one is becoming liberated without a support system, meaning a qualified teacher, the correct teachings and expert guidance.

Those who reach non-regressive liberation instantly, like cig car bas, are no longer present in this degenerate age.” – Kyle Dixon, 2018

“In this case, to be non-Buddhist means to go against the Buddha’s teaching of anatman (no permanent self). The teaching of the metaphor of the mani jewel (one bright jewel) which is permanent and never changes, even though the surface color is changing is, according to Dogen, nothing other than atman *(Soh: atman means Self, which is a false view in Buddhism’s teachings that is eradicated with the attainment of either stream entry or the first bhumi)”* - Zen Master Shohaku Okumura, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/03/about-whether-xyz-teacher-realised.html

“[24/12/15, 10:42:07 PM] John Tan: when you say mind/clarity and sound/phenomenon...why mirror and reflection is a bad analogy?
[24/12/15, 10:43:12 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Because it can be mistaken as an inherent mirror reflecting inherent objects
[24/12/15, 10:45:16 PM] John Tan: Because a mirror is not feeling the reflection. Is awareness like that? hearing sound, there is just sound... the whole of sound... fully experienced... It is always the reflection. Fully felt and tasted... Separation is simply a mistaken view. So how can a mirror be a good example ... Instead it is misleading people turning away from realising what exactly is clarity.

What actually one wants to emphasize is the non-arisen unborn nature of sound... instead we created a mirror and mislead people to look at the mirror and neglect the reflection. Distancing further from directly and effortlessly experiencing what we called "awareness" and also misleading people from see non-arisen from DO [dependent origination] view.”

“[10:30 AM, 6/4/2020] John Tan: Issue about a mirror is always it gives people a sense of something is beyond. Instead of bringing people into the relative, conventional, day to day. Seeing the nature of the relative and conventional is the key and is where profound insights and wisdom lie.
[10:32 AM, 6/4/2020] John Tan: This is clear in Mahayana buddhism especially.”

“[28/3/16, 9:54:39 AM] John Tan: Whether there is a mirror view or otherwise depends on whether there is a dualistic view. If there is an "anything" besides appearing phenomena, then a "mirror" view has to arise and experience cannot be effortlessly non-dual and total exertion as just walking, just breathing, just sitting, just seen will not be fully appreciated.
[28/3/16, 9:59:02 AM] John Tan: So what is I M purge of duality, substantiality and personality?

[28/3/16, 8:32:49 PM] John Tan: What realised to be presence is a right experience with distorted view
[28/3/16, 8:33:56 PM] John Tan: When the view of duality, substantiality and personality is purged, there can only be just sitting, breathing, seeing, hearing ..etc
[28/3/16, 8:35:21 PM] John Tan: What that is previously understood as "entity" is realised to be empty and when this is seen through, there is "no thing" other than spontaneous and vibrant activity.
[28/3/16, 8:36:35 PM] John Tan: In I M, there is the direct taste of "pure presence" but reified due to dualistic tendencies.
[28/3/16, 8:37:20 PM] Soh Wei Yu: There is a sense of voidness that is like all encompassing space that is vivid, sharp and wakeful. But people take it to mean it is a permanent background... When opening eyes the spacious quality is still there but not as a background but a complete foreground outpouring
[28/3/16, 8:37:46 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Even the void is also foreground
[28/3/16, 8:38:05 PM] John Tan: So what is called pure presence is when pure of personality, substantiality and I M is simply in the seen just the seen...or just sitting.
[28/3/16, 8:40:26 PM] John Tan: The experience is non-dual but the view prevents thorough and effortless no-self

[28/3/16, 8:43:06 PM] John Tan: conventions will still be employed but should not be taken as representing or denoting anything real becoz nothing can be found when sought ... Just a mistaken perception
[28/3/16, 8:43:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[28/3/16, 8:47:23 PM] John Tan: Telling people there is no mirror is to point to the fact that the analogy of mirror is truly a dis-service. Great for an initial point out and leading one to an initial taste of pure presence.
[28/3/16, 8:48:52 PM] John Tan: Because practitioners often shunt from the on going reflections and chase after the mirror.
[28/3/16, 8:52:27 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[28/3/16, 8:52:42 PM] Soh Wei Yu: You mean mirror is great for leading to initial taste of pure presence?
[28/3/16, 8:53:03 PM] John Tan: Yes
[28/3/16, 8:53:15 PM] John Tan: Like I AM
[28/3/16, 8:54:09 PM] John Tan: however genuine realisation starts from realizing there is no mirror for the dust to alight
[28/3/16, 8:55:02 PM] John Tan: That does not mean "non-existence" of consciousness
[28/3/16, 8:57:39 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[28/3/16, 9:01:56 PM] John Tan: So what is the purpose?
[28/3/16, 9:14:14 PM] Soh Wei Yu: The purpose is to realise that awareness is a convention for the transient ongoing happening.. And is not a captured dead image hiding somewhere
[28/3/16, 9:14:33 PM] Soh Wei Yu: So the aliveness of ongoing phenomena is awareness, which is just a convention
[28/3/16, 9:16:25 PM] John Tan: Awareness and phenomena are just mere conventions...should not be taken as true and real...but the purpose is for us to have right experience and understanding
[28/3/16, 9:18:09 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[28/3/16, 9:19:11 PM] John Tan: However when expressed in such a way, it is easy to mistaken one that habors such a view is nihilistic.”

“Mirror analogy is outright misleading and promote dualistic and agency framework

Soh

Sent a video from a social network to John that used the mirror analogy.

John Tan commented:

“Yes. Seriously I have no idea why the mirror analogy is being used by so many masters... ...Imo opinion it is just outright misleading and promote dualistic and agency framework.

Purpose of anatta and dependent origination are precisely to point out that.

In order words, the agent that initiates action is seen through and understood that it is luminous appearances that originates dependently with conditions without any need of effort as there is no "agent" and separation.””

Anatta is a key insight for liberation. Why is this so? Because as Buddha taught, Appropriated Aggregates are Suffering - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/08/what-does-it-mean-that-appropriated.html -- which means all aggregates tainted with I-making and mine-making are suffering. There can be no liberation from suffering without realizing and actualizing anatta. This is why of the 7 Stages of Thusness, only stage 5 onwards are considered the key important insights of Buddhism. Stages before Stage 5 are in fact not considered ‘Buddhist enlightenment’ and can be found in other religions.

To get an introductory understanding of Buddha’s teachings, check out this book: What the Buddha Taught by Walpola Rahula

“Depending on the conditions of an individual, it may not be obvious that it is “always thought watching thought rather than a watcher watching thought.” or "the watcher is that thought." Because this is the key insight and a step that cannot afford to be wrong along the path of liberation, I cannot help but with some disrespectful tone say,

For those masters that taught,
“Let thoughts arise and subside,
See the background mirror as perfect and be unaffected.”
With all due respect, they have just “blah” something nice but deluded.

Rather,

See that there is no one behind thoughts.
First, one thought then another thought.
With deepening insight it will later be revealed,
Always just this, One Thought!
Non-arising, luminous yet empty!” – John Tan, 2009, On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

“Soh Wei Yu
25m ·
Shared with Your friends
This explanation by Geoff on anatta is very good. Seer and seeing dependent on seen means no [self-existing] seer or seeing. Seen dependent on faculty and cognition is nothing seen. Therefore, in the seen just the seen is no seer, no seeing, and nothing seen. The vivid radiance of appearances are not denied yet resembles a rainbow or a mirage, illusory and unestablished.

p.s. The source PDF by Geoff [although this particular text is focused on the Pali canon, Geoff is both a scholar and practitioner in both Vajrayana/Mahamudra and Theravada traditions] is so good that John Tan has commented its good quality multiple times and has asked me to pin it to the top of the 'Insightful Materials' of the AtR blog. Hope

there are more similar summaries for Mahayana and Vajrayana paths as well. Measureless Mind PDF: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/09/great-resource-of-buddha-teachings.html

The Recognition of Selflessness (Anattasaññā)

Look at the world and see its emptiness Mogharāja, always mindful,
Eliminating the view of self, one goes beyond death.
One who views the world this way is not seen by the king of death.
— Sutta Nipāta 5.15, Mogharājamāṇavapucchā

The contemplation of selflessness is given in AN 10.60 Girimānanda Sutta:

Now what, Ānanda, is the recognition of selflessness? Here, Ānanda, a monk, gone to the wilderness, to the root of a tree, or to an empty place, discriminates thus: ‘The eye is not-self, forms are not-self; the ear is not-self, sounds are not-self; the nose is not-self, odors are not-self; the tongue is not-self, flavors are not-self; the body is not-self, tactual objects are not-self; the mind is not-self, phenomena are not-self.’ Thus he abides contemplating selflessness with regard to the six internal and external sensory spheres. This, Ānanda, is called the recognition of selflessness.

In practice, we need to be able to recognize this absence of self in our immediate experience: When seeing, there is the coming together of visible form, the eye, and visual consciousness. When hearing, there is the coming together of sound, the ear, and auditory consciousness. When touching, there is the coming together of tactual sensation, the body, and tactile consciousness. When thinking, there is the thought, the mind, and mental consciousness. These processes arise simply through ‘contact.’ When a sense faculty and a sensory object make contact, the corresponding sensory consciousness arises. This entire process occurs through specific conditionality (idappaccayatā). There is no independent, fully autonomous agent or self controlling any of this.

An independent, autonomous self would, by definition, be:

1. permanent
2. satisfactory
3. not prone to dis-ease
4. fully self-determining (be in complete autonomous control of itself)

Thus, what is being negated is a permanent, satisfactory self which is not prone to old age, sickness, and death. As SN 22.59 Pañcavaggiya Sutta (abridged) states:

Monks, form, feeling, recognition, fabrications, and consciousness are not-self. Were form, feeling, recognition, fabrications, or consciousness self, then this form, feeling, recognition, fabrications, and consciousness would not lead to dis-ease.

This criterion of dis-ease is the context for the following statement that:

None can have it of form, feeling, recognition, fabrications, or consciousness: ‘Let my form, feeling, recognition, fabrications, or consciousness be thus, let my form, feeling, recognition, fabrications, or consciousness be not thus.’

By engaging in sustained, dedicated contemplation we find only impermanent processes, conditionally arisen, and not fully self-determining. First we clearly see that all conditioned phenomena of body and mind are impermanent. Next we come to see that whatever is impermanent is unsatisfactory in that it can provide no lasting happiness. Then we realize that all impermanent, unsatisfactory phenomena of body and mind are not-self — they can’t be the basis for a self, which by definition would be permanent and (one would hope) satisfactory. This relationship between the recognition of impermanence, the recognition of unsatisfactoriness, and the recognition of selflessness is illustrated in the following diagram.

With the recognition of selflessness there is an emptying out of both the “subject” and “object” aspects of experience. We come to understand that “I-making” and “mine-making” with regard to the mind and body as well as all external representations is deluded. When the recognition of selflessness is fully developed there is no longer any reification of substantial referents to be experienced in relation to subjective grasping. Whatever is seen is merely the seen (diṭṭhamatta). Whatever is heard or sensed is merely the heard (sutamatta) and merely the sensed (mutamatta). Whatever is known is merely the known (viññātamatta). This is explained in Ud 1.10 Bāhiya Sutta:

"Then, Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

When there is no self to be found one’s experience becomes very simple, direct, and uncluttered. When seeing, there is the coming together of visible form, the eye, and visual consciousness, that’s all. There is no separate “seer.” The seer is entirely dependent upon the seen. There can be no seer independent of the seen. There is no separate, independent subject or self.

This is also the case for the sensory object. The “seen” is entirely dependent upon the eye faculty and visual consciousness. There can be no object seen independent of the eye faculty and cognition. This is the case for all possible sensory objects. There is no separate, independent sensory object.

The same holds true for sensory consciousness as well. “Seeing” is entirely dependent upon the eye and visible form. There can be no seeing independent of the eye and cognition. This is the case for all possible sensory cognitions. There is no separate, independent sensory consciousness.

It’s important to understand this experientially. Let’s take the straightforward empirical experience of you looking at this screen right now as an example. Conventionally speaking, you could describe the experience as “I see the computer screen.” Another way of describing this is that there’s a “seer” who “sees” the “seen.” But look at the screen: are there really three independent and separate parts to your experience? Or are “seer,” “sees,” and “seen,” just three conceptual labels applied to this experience in which the three parts are entirely interdependent?

The “seer,” “seen,” and “seeing” are all empty and insubstantial. The eye faculty, visible form, and visual consciousness are all interdependent aspects of the same experience. You can’t peel one away and still have a sensory experience — there is no separation. AN 4.24 Kāḷakārāma Sutta:

Thus, monks, the Tathāgata does not conceive an [object] seen when seeing what is to be seen. He does not conceive an unseen. He does not conceive a to-be-seen. He does not conceive a seer.

He does not conceive an [object] heard when hearing what is to be heard. He does not conceive an unheard. He does not conceive a to-be-heard. He does not conceive a hearer.

He does not conceive an [object] sensed when sensing what is to be sensed. He does not conceive an unsensed. He does not conceive a to-be-sensed. He does not conceive a senser.

He does not conceive an [object] known when knowing what is to be known. He does not conceive an unknown. He does not conceive a to-be-known. He does not conceive a knower.

Sensory consciousness can’t be isolated as separate and independent. Nor can any of these other interdependent phenomena. Even the designations that we apply to these various phenomena are entirely conventional, dependent designations. But this doesn’t mean that we should now interpret our experience as being some sort of cosmic oneness or unity consciousness or whatever one may want to call it. That's just another empty, dependent label isn’t it? The whole point of this analysis is to see the emptiness of all referents, and thereby stop constructing and defining a “self.”

The purpose of correctly engaging in the contemplation of selflessness is stated in AN 7.49 Dutiyasaññā Sutta:
‘The recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, monks, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit; it merges with the death-free, has the death-free as its end.’ Thus it was said. In reference to what was it said?

Monks, when a monk’s mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, his mind is rid of “I-making” and “mine-making” with regard to this conscious body and externally with regard to all representations, and has transcended conceit, is at peace, and is well liberated.

If, monks, when a monk’s mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, his mind is not rid of “I-making” and “mine-making” with regard to this conscious body and externally with regard to all representations, and has not transcended conceit, is not at peace, and is not well liberated, then he should know, ‘I have not developed the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, there is no stepwise distinction in me, I have not obtained the strength of development.’ In that way he is fully aware there. But if, monks, when a monk’s mind frequently remains acquainted with the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, his mind is rid of “I-making” and “mine-making” with regard to this conscious body and externally with regard to all representations, and has transcended conceit, is at peace, and is well liberated, then he should know, ‘I have developed the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, there is stepwise distinction in me, I have obtained the strength of development.’ In that way he is fully aware there.

‘The recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, monks, when developed and cultivated, is of great fruit and benefit; it merges with the death-free, has the death-free as its end.’ Thus it was said. And in reference to this it was said.

Here we get to the heart of the matter, which is one of the most subtle aspects of the Buddhadhamma. Simply stated: when ignorance ceases, belief in self simultaneously ceases. And when there is no self to be found, then there is no self to die or take birth. This right here is “death-free.” And it is precisely this that the Buddha is declaring when he says to Mogharāja:

Look at the world and see its emptiness Mogharāja, always mindful,
Eliminating the view of self, one goes beyond death.
One who views the world this way is not seen by the king of death.

When one completely abandons the underlying tendencies which give rise to mistaken apprehensions of a self — any and all notions of “I am” — then there is no self to die. This stilling of the “currents of conceiving” over one’s imagined self, and the resulting peace that is empty of birth, aging, and death, is straightforwardly presented in MN 140 Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta:

‘He has been stilled where the currents of conceiving do not flow. And when the currents of conceiving do not flow, he is said to be a sage at peace.’ Thus was it said. With reference to what was it said?

Monk, “I am” is a conceiving. “I am this” is a conceiving. “I shall be” is a conceiving. “I shall not be” ... “I shall be possessed of form” ... “I shall be formless” ... “I shall be percipient” ... “I shall be non-percipient” ... “I shall be neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient” is a conceiving. Conceiving is a disease, conceiving is a cancer, conceiving is an arrow. By going beyond all conceiving, monk, he is said to be a sage at peace.
Furthermore, a sage at peace is not born, does not age, does not die. He is unagitated, and is free from longing. He has nothing whereby he would be born. Not being born, how could he age? Not aging, how could he die? Not dying, how could he be agitated? Not being agitated, for what will he long?

So it was in reference to this that it was said, ‘He has been stilled where the currents of conceiving do not flow. And when the currents of conceiving do not flow, he is said to be a sage at peace.’

Truly, “a sage at peace is not born, does not age, does not die.” In this way, when ignorance ceases, the entire complex of conditioned arising bound up with dissatisfaction also ceases. When all traces of “I-making” and “mine-making” are abandoned through the fully integrated threefold training of ethical conduct, meditation, and discernment, just this is dispassion (virāga). Just this is cessation (nirodha). Just this is extinguishment (nibbāna). Just this is without outflows (anāsava). Just this is not-born (ajāta), not-become (abhūta), not-made (akata), not-fabricated (asaṅkhata), endless (ananta), indestructible (apalokita), and yes, death-free (amata). It is freedom (mutti).

The Recognition of Selflessness and the Seven Factors of Awakening (Satta Bojjhaṅgā):

Sustained, dedicated practice of the recognition of selflessness will gradually create the optimal conditions for the arising of all seven factors of awakening. SN 46.73 Anatta Sutta (abridged):

Here monks, a monk develops the awakening factor of mindfulness accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of meditative composure accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of equanimity accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go.

It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that one of two fruits is to be expected: either final gnosis in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of nonreturning. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great good. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great security from bondage. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to a great sense of urgency. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to dwelling in great comfort.”

“[8:04 PM, 3/24/2021] John Tan: There is a msg I remember when I was in FB quite few years ago. Mr. J quoted a mahamudra master saying there is a self going from life to life, then I said is no such self, only ongoing reflection. I remember you also posted in dharmaoverground.
[8:06 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Also many years ago, someone posted a quote by a dzogchen master,
"To clarify the Dzogchen view: "We are just what we are, the Natural State
which is like a mirror. It is clear and empty, and yet it reflects
everything, all possible existences and all possible lifetimes. But it
never changes and it does not depend on anything else."

Thusness commented online about that dzogchen master,

And definitely very different from anatta, the Anatta State is like
reflections turn alive when the mirror disappears. Reflections are
vividly clear yet empty. Everything, all possible existences and all
possible lifetimes are simply reflections, they appear but are nothing
real, ungraspable, un-originated, unborn.April 24 at 3:24pm · Unlike · 7
[8:06 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: this one?
[8:06 PM, 3/24/2021] John Tan: Yes. Wah...
[8:06 PM, 3/24/2021] John Tan: Can't imagine you can search so fast🤣🤣🤣
[8:06 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: no la just google search lor
[8:06 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: lol
[8:06 PM, 3/24/2021] John Tan: I searched whole day
[8:07 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: 😂😂
[8:07 PM, 3/24/2021] John Tan: How you searched?
[8:07 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: "dharmaoverground jax ongoing reflection self lifetime to lifetime"
[8:07 PM, 3/24/2021] John Tan: I did but nothing comes out
[8:07 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: its the first result https://www.google.com/search...
[8:09 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: a dzogchen master, not mahamudra.. but then even nowadays many mahamudra teachers seem to fall into that sort of view.
only prabodha/abhaya devi and acarya malcolm that i know places emphasis on anatta and emptiness after initial recognition of clarity
[8:13 PM, 3/24/2021] John Tan: This is a discussion with Mr. J right? you know when?
[8:14 PM, 3/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: 2013 http://dharmaconnectiongroup.blogspot.com/2013/07/dzogchen-chan-and-hashang-mahayana_14.html ”

“Soh Wei Yu
Lewis Stevens
"Does the realization of groundlessness lead inevitably to liberation,..... Or perhaps liberation becomes superfluous with the realization that there is no one to be liberated!"

Soh:

It does lead to liberation.

Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche:

"Why is it that all sentient beings think that there is a self? The self is not conceived of because it exists. In fact, although it does not exist, there is merely a conception that it exists because of an erroneous mind that is deluded and mistaken about its existence. This is similar to perceiving a rope to be a snake or like seeing a young lady [as real] in a dream.

It might be thought that if there is a self, then it is reasonable to be bound to samsara by afflictions and to become liberated when cutting through that bondage. However, if there were no self, who then becomes liberated? Therefore, it would be unreasonable to strive to liberate the self!

It is not the case that one strives to liberate an existent self. For instance, if you are frightened when mistaking a rope for a snake, you will feel relieved when you see that there is no snake. Similarly, by conceiving of a self where there is no self, you accumulate afflictions and karma and thereby continuously experience suffering in samsara. When realizing the lack of self through authentic insight, karma and afflictions will cease to be and you will be liberated. Therefore, what is called “liberation” is merely the cessation of a mistake in your mind-stream or the cessation of your deluded mind. There is no liberation of an existent self. If there were a self, then ego-clinging could never be turned away, and if this ego-clinging is not relinquished, then karma and afflictions do not cease. Thus, due to being attached to the self, you continuously enter samsara. —A FEAST ON THE NECTAR OF THE SUPREME VEHICLE, 102–3"

Duckworth, Douglas; Mipam, Jamgon. Jamgon Mipam: His Life and Teachings (p. 145). Shambhala. Kindle Edition.

Soh Wei Yu

It is good and important to point out the aspect of clarity first, self-enquiry for realizing the I AM.
But without the anatta realization there can be no liberation.

2006:

(5:25 PM) John: For one that truly experience anatta and emptiness, he will know that there is no other way towards liberation. Dualistic view is itself suffering. There is no escape and
cannot be compromised. so though ET [Soh: Eckhart Tolle, who is at the I AM stage] talked about the silence, there is the experience but there is no liberation. There is constant struggle. do not be deceived. 🙂 though what he said about the experience is quite true.
(5:27 PM) AEN: non-effort can only come from longchen's sort of 'non doer' understanding am i right
(5:27 PM) AEN: oic why no liberation?
(5:27 PM) John: one cannot experience that blissful liberated experience in a dualistic mode.
(5:28 PM) John: yes....longchen is beginning to understand more... just beginning...
(5:28 PM) AEN: oic
(5:28 PM) AEN: eckhart tolle in dualistic mode?
(5:28 PM) John: there are just certain experiences that cannot be described in words.
(5:28 PM) AEN: oic
(5:29 PM) John: it is like what ken wilber say about the non-duality experience and absolutely no witness without the layer of separation... how is this possible. it is 'seeing', awaking of wisdom, awakening of anatta and emptiness nature. no other way can lead us to liberation.
(5:30 PM) AEN: icic..

(5:30 PM) John: i mean maintaining it like every moment. I mean the description of ken wilber is there. but the depth of the experience...i got to read the simple feeling of being. 🙂
(5:31 PM) John: however by the title, i think he is still not there. 😀 (comments by Soh: it became clearer later that Ken Wilber is at Thusness Stage 4 and have not reached Stage 5 clarity of anatta realization)
(5:31 PM) AEN: o icic
(5:31 PM) John: lol
(5:31 PM) AEN: the title? you mean the simple feeling of being. wrong?
(5:31 PM) John: i have to read first lah. the title cannot reflect out one that is fully authenticated in suchness. 🙂 nevertheless, none i have read can correctly describe it so far. 🙂
(5:33 PM) AEN: oic.. so how to correctly describe it
(5:33 PM) John: the next thing to look out is the stability.
(5:33 PM) AEN: oic
(5:34 PM) John: i think ken wilber has engaged too much in theoretical conceptualization after the experience of non-dual. Seems to retrogress....hehe
(5:34 PM) AEN: hahaha icic
(5:35 PM) John: must practice hard. 🙂”

“He *[XYZ Rinpoche]* focused more on awareness as background. Without realizing the nature of mind and phenomena, karma continues to be generated.

When there is a background, one can't liberate actually but generates subtle karma IMO. Only through realizing the nature of mind and phenomena one can self liberates (karma).” – John Tan, 2018

“There is thinking, no thinker
There is hearing, no hearer
There is seeing, no seer

In thinking, just thoughts
In hearing, just sounds
In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.”

.....

Depending on the conditions of an individual, it may not be obvious that it is **“always thought watching thought rather than a watcher watching thought.” or "the watcher is that thought."** Because this is the key insight and a step that cannot afford to be wrong along the path of liberation, I cannot help but with some disrespectful tone say,

For those masters that taught,
“Let thoughts arise and subside,
See the background mirror as perfect and be unaffected.”
With all due respect, they have just “blah” something nice but deluded.

Rather,

See that there is no one behind thoughts.
First, one thought then another thought.
With deepening insight it will later be revealed,
Always just this, One Thought!
Non-arising, luminous yet empty!

- John Tan, 2009, the two stanzas of anatta in On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

“The most direct and succinct explanation of anatta is that there is no actual seer of sights, no actual hearer of sound, etc., there is no actual internal point of reference, or subject, that is apprehending alleged referents, or objects.” – Kyle Dixon, 2020
https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/in52dv/new_here_can_someone_explain_the_concept_of/

“krodha
2 days ago · edited 2 days ago

Is it to say that all the things I use to identify myself are untrue? All my likes and dislikes? My personality traits? My beliefs?

Kyle Dixon: It is more so that there is ultimately no separate self as an entity which possesses those traits. The self is a mere construct which is only those traits, and so on. In actuality however, those traits do not truly construct an entity. The entity or self is inferred, and we use that inference as a tool for engaging with and navigating experience, but we mistake that inference to be a referent, meaning we become entrenched in the nexus of conditions and come to view the self as an inherently real entity.

The actual meaning of selflessness in these teachings revolves around the non-conceptual, direct realization that there in fact is no inherent self, or any self at all for that matter. This results from recognizing that there is no thinker of thought, no separate feeler of feelings, no seer of sights, no hearer of sound, and so on.

Here is Sera Khandro, a prominent 19th/20th century practitioner discussing the self:

A literal definition of the term “individual” is as follows: The two obscurations, along with habitual patterns, fill an individual’s stream of being; and the contaminated aggregation of attachment forms the foundation for the individual. What is called “the self” is the consciousness predisposed to assume the existence of a self: during the periods of waking life, dream, transitional states [bardos] between lifetimes, or in a future life, a self merely appears when none exists. That consciousness is what is called “an individual self.” Immediately thereafter, subsequent knowing and discursive thought give clarity to the consciousness predisposed to cling to an “I” where there is none, and a sense of self where none exists, and make them stable and solid.

...

What does Buddhism mean when they say there is no self

Kyle Dixon: Selflessness means there is ultimately no actual subject, which means there is no actual internal reference point that is apprehending sensory phenomena.

In describing this simply it means through your practice you will hopefully, eventually, awaken to recognize that there is no actual seer of sights, no hearer of sounds, and so on. The feeling of an internal seer or hearer, etc., is a useful but false construct that is created and fortified by various causes and conditions.

We suffer when we cling to this construct and think it is actually real. Recognition of the actual nature of that construct is liberating and freeing.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

“Once I was a Body.
Later I became a Name.
Soon after I am merely I.
Then, there never was an I.
Now,
what else besides those words forming on the screen!” - John Tan, 2006

“The Stanza One complements and refines Stanza Two to make the experience of no-self thorough and effortless into just only chirping birds, drum beats, footsteps, sky, mountain, walking, chewing and tasting; no witness whatsoever hiding anywhere! 'Everything' is a process, event, manifestation and phenomenon, nothing ontological or having an essence.

This phase is a very thorough non-dual experience; there is effortlessness in the non-dual and one realizes that in seeing there is always just scenery and in hearing, always just sounds. We find true delights in naturalness and ordinariness as commonly expressed in Zen as 'chop wood, carry water; spring comes, grass grows'.” - John Tan, 2009

“Phase 4 is the dissolution of subject/object division. [Phase] 5 onwards is the dissolution of inherent tendency.
But not denying clarity. Rather [it is] the full, complete, effortless expression of empty clarity.
Or experience in its total and natural state... which is non-dual, insubstantial and natural.” - John Tan, 2014

“9/5/2012 11:51 PM: John: [A reified] Aware intelligence is the problem. Just say I have been told to understand immense intelligence not as if someone is there to act and direct, rather as total exertion of the universe to make this moment possible; then all appearances are miraculous and marvelous.” - John Tan, 2012

Mr. J quoted Y Rinpoche’s quote about being an unchanging mirror, to which John Tan replied in 2012/2013: "John Tan: And definitely very different from anatta, the Anatta State is like reflections turn alive when the mirror

disappears. Reflections are vividly clear yet empty. Everything, all possible existences and all possible lifetimes are simply reflections, they appear but are nothing real, ungraspable, un-originated, unborn.
April 24 at 3:24pm · Unlike · 7"

“(7:53 PM) Thusness: X Rinpoche makes a good statement but that is before understanding stage 5 and 6. That is, without the source, nothing happens. However in Buddhism, insight is to see, penetrate and investigate and become thoroughly clear that the idea of a source, an essence is unnecessary. Once you experience and arise the insight of anatta, you begin open to happening without source, without the need of an essence. This is then the beginning of Buddhism.” - John Tan, 2009

“7/9/2012 11:23 PM: John: For anatta, opening will be realized as action... this manifestation. But for those that practice non-dual awareness, they always trace back to the source. For anatta, there is no source to trace, it is fully manifested as the immediate moment of manifestation or as this flow of action. Until this view is fully integrated into moment to moment of experience... Then you start practicing concentration

10/27/2012 8:20 PM: Soh Wei Yu: But he ask about the source, where does thoughts come from, where does cause and effect come from, who am i
10/27/2012 8:22 PM: John: One day got the opportunity tell why zen is become one with action is because of the realization that source is not necessary” - Conversation with John Tan, 2012

“Anatta overcomes substance view of subject.

"I don't think anatta overcomes the fixation on substance, that happens on shunyata. That being said, Spira could be in anatta without knowing it. "

No. Rupert is clearly in one mind and no mind. No mind is clearly not anatta realization.

This is why John Tan said, "15/4/13 12:41:53 AM: John Tan: In this case (One Mind) all is being consumed/subsumed into the source
15/4/13 12:42:45 AM: John Tan: Sound is consciousness is not one mind but no mind
15/4/13 12:44:02 AM: John Tan: When the hearer is gone and there is only sound, that sound is precisely consciousness
15/4/13 12:45:15 AM: John Tan: That is the experience of no-mind
15/4/13 12:50:31 AM: John Tan: No mind is like the mirror becomes transparent and there is just that
15/4/13 12:51:22 AM: John Tan: But the view is the reflection and the mirror is not the same
15/4/13 12:52:09 AM: John Tan: Like sky is not the flowing cloud
John TanFriday, November 22, 2013 at 8:25am UTC+08
But this is also good so that the point that a practitioner may have clear experience of no mind but a view of one mind..

John TanFriday, November 22, 2013 at 8:26am UTC+08" - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../differentiati...

You can see Rupert's writings clearly shows the progression from I AM to one mind to no mind, but not the realization of anatta. His final view remains that of 'the reflection and the mirror is not the same' - one being the changeless sole reality of the superimpositions of other transient phenomena. Although in terms of no mind experience it is similar, the view and realization differs (therefore always the importance of AtR's emphasis on distinguishing view, realization and experience) - without the correct realizations the experience of no-mind cannot be effortless and become a natural state, there will always be the tendency to subtly reference and abide and leave traces in the Absolute. Anatta realization is key to being free from reference-point, non-abiding and free from leaving traces, as an ultimate cannot be found besides the relative.

Someone who realizes anatta will have a paradigm shift as clear as day. Anatta is the realisation that there never was a [truly existing] mind/Mind/Awareness/Brahman/Presence/Ultimate Reality/etc etc. Mind, Awareness, Seeing, etc, all these are just conventions for the ongoing appearance. There is simply no seer-seeing-seen. Having such a realization, one simply stops projecting an ultimate substance or substratum. I remember right after anatta, it was a very obvious shift. I no longer see consciousness as a 'substance' holding all appearances. Rather 'consciousness' is just the mere event and manifestation happening or dependently originating without agent, there isn't even a single thought about 'consciousness', just the self-luminous event/manifestation happening or gaplessly and non-dually appearing at no distance, that's all. No self/Self or static source and substratum or reality underlying all. Completely dynamic and centerless and boundless and seamless beyond/free of the threefold structures of subject-action-object, seer-seeing-seen. As I wrote before, even the notion that 'consciousness is modulating as everything' falls apart. All these can be found in my e-journal entries right after my anatta realization.

At that point, I was in fact closer in view to Actual Freedom than Yogacara. Subjective idealism holds no appeal to me anymore after that realisation of anatta.

Dependent origination and emptiness is then another leap that liberates the 'foreground'.

"So what is one mind, what is no mind and what is original mind in this context? One mind is post non-dual but subsuming leaving trace. No mind is just one mind except that there is evenness till the last trace is gone. Like what explains in the text. Uji...all is time therefore no time. When you go from dual to non dual or one mind to no mind, those are stages and experiences... If you got the condition to get pointed out that originally there never was a mind, there are no stages to climb... that is original mind. This requires insights and wisdom." - John Tan, 2020

“_____, what Albert is talking is more of:

1. Mountains as mountains, and waters as waters.
2. No mountain, no water
3. Mountains have always been mountains and waters have always been waters.

Which is different from the famous poem of zen master Ch'ing-yüan Wei-hsin:

1. Mountains as mountains, and waters as waters.
2. Mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters
3. Mountains is again mountains and waters is again waters.

Imo and with all due respect to zen master Ch'ing-yüan, I find Albert's insight more refined. What zen master Ch'ing-yüan expressed is the state of no-mind and embodied wisdom of the relative whereas what Albert expressed is the original mind that has no entry or exit, therefore there is no "once again" and this "elimination" of "once again" is crucial insight to natural spontaneity.

That said in the discussion of "natural spontaneity", it seemed to be perceived as an art to be mastered or a state to be achieved, which is a contradiction from the expression of "no once again". Imo "natural spontaneity" has no goal, no form, no path and requires no training. Whether one paints clumsily or beautifully like Picasso doesn't matter, precisely because it's not an art or a state to be mastered or achieved. It is an insight or an awakening of one's natural, unconditioned radiance and intelligence that when the bell rings, there is "tingsssssss" and this simple clear sound -- "tingssssss" is a total unique masterpiece beyond any artificial creation; even with the entire power of the universe, it can't create another similar - tingsssssss. So treasure it and enjoy your new year, _____!

Btw I am normally busy earning $$$, so sometimes I may not answer question. 🤣🤣🤣” – John Tan, 2021

It is important not to mistaken Stage 5 as merely a state of egolessness.

“Even though there is also no sense of personal self at the mature phase of I AM which is why Greg Goode said it is free of suffering [pertaining to the sense of personal self], one only sees through and becomes truly and fully emptied of all sense of self and Self [even the unborn and undying metaphysical Self] at Thusness Stage 5.“ - Soh, 2019

“(9:46 AM) Thusness: impersonality is the doing away of the ego *(Soh: see four aspects of I AM in the stage 1 chapter)*, doing away with the I AM is anatta *(Soh: all ultimate and metaphysical identity or Brahman is completely seen through and dissolved in stage 5)*” - John Tan, 2009

“Buddhism is nothing but replacing the 'Self' in Hinduism with Condition Arising. Keep the clarity, the presence, the luminosity and eliminate the ultimate 'Self', the controller, the supreme. Still you must taste, sense, eat, hear and see Pure Awareness in every authentication. And every authentication is Bliss.” - John Tan, 2004

"Then, at the time of the supreme quality on the path of joining, one realizes that since the perceived does not exist, neither does the perceiver. Right after this, the truth of suchness, which is free from dualistic fixation, is directly realized. This is said to be the attainment of the first ground."

- Dzogchen teacher Jamgom Mipham Rinpoche, in the book “Jamgon Mipam: His Life and Teachings”

“佛性者，即是人法二空所显真如，由真如故无能骂所骂。通达此理，离虚妄执。

Buddha-nature is the suchness (tathatā) revealed through the two emptinesses of person and phenomenon. Due to suchness there is no ridiculing or ridiculed (i.e. subject and object). Penetrating this principle one is free from delusional attachments. - Treatise on Buddha Nature Written by Bodhisattva Vasubandhu https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?t=2416 “

(Also related: [insight] [buddhism] A reconsideration of the meaning of "Stream-Entry" considering the data points of both pragmatic Dharma and traditional Buddhism , Definition of First Bhumi)

“In the cycle of teachings of Maitreya and the writings of the great charioteer Asaṅga, whose thinking is one and the same, it is taught that individuals on the level of earnest aspiration first understand that all phenomena are simply the mind. Subsequently they have the experience that there is no object to be apprehended in the mind. Then, at the stage of the supreme mundane level on the path of joining, they realize that because there is no object, neither is there a subject, and immediately after that, they attain the first level with the direct realization of the truth of ultimate reality devoid of the duality of subject and object.” – Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche, Madhyamaka, Cittamātra, and the true intent of Maitreya and Asaṅga self.Buddhism

Also see: Cittamātra is an expedient pedagogic tool https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/02/cittamatra-is-expedient-pedagogic-tool.html

“Self-view in the first fetter [that is eliminated in Stream Entry and First Bhumi based on the suttic and sutric, doctrinal, original, traditional definition, as opposed to the many differing post-modern re-interpretations] includes the view of Eternal Witness, and the wrong view of partial-eternalism where consciousness is unchanging while all other aggregates change, even the Upanishadic infinite Self is named and refuted by Buddhas as a wrong view. The Buddha has specifically described and named these views, and they are all grouped under sakkaya ditthi, the erroneous view of self. All these are defined clearly by Buddha and falls under the category of Self-View: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../anatta-not...
Anyone who has read the suttas will know that I AM and one mind levels of realisation are non-Buddhist realisations and such substantialist views are categorically rejected and relinquished upon realising the nature of dharma, even in stream entry.
Rupert Spira's view is that of a static, monistic consciousness subsuming everything into 'itself'.
To be free from self view is to be free from *All* views of self/Self, eternalism and nihilism, partial eternalism, etc.” – Soh, 2020

“There are indications that the Buddha himself went through the Atman-Brahman phase. He attained the goal of the Upanishadic path taught by his two Samkhya teachers (the Samkhya path aims at a liberation that consist of realizing immaterial Purusha – pure consciousness as true self), and despite approval and confirmation from his two teachers, felt dissatisfied and left them in search of genuine liberation under the Bodhi tree prior to his full awakening.

In many teachings, the Buddha directly repudiated the Atman-Brahman teaching. One of them can be found in the famous Bahiya Sutta from the Udana, the scripture that made me realise anatta back in 2010 (see: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/10/my-commentary-on-bahiya-sutta.html , https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html , https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/the-breakthrough.html , A Zen Exploration of the Bahiya Sutta)

According to notes from Leigh Brasington in http://www.leighb.com/ud1_10.htm :

1. The bark cloth clothing would most likely mean that Bahiya was a follower of the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad. The Brhadaranyaka Upanishad makes a big deal about trees (personal communication from John Peacock).

2. Why did the Buddha give this particular instruction to Bahiya? The bark cloth clothing marked him as a serious student of the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad; thus he would be familiar with the teaching found there: "The unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the uncognized cognizer... There is no other seer but he, no other hearer, no other thinker, no other cognizer. This is thy self, the inner controller, the immortal...." Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 3.7.23.

Bahiya would also be familiar with "... that imperishable is the unseen seer, the unheard hearer, the unthought thinker, the ununderstood understander. Other than it there is naught that sees. Other than it there is naught that hears. Other than it there is naught that thinks. Other than it there is naught that understands...." Brhadaranyaka Upanishad 3.8.11.

The Buddha, as he often does, takes something his questioner is familiar with and gives it a subtle but profound twist: there's no Atman, there's just seeing, just hearing, etc.“ – Soh, 2020

“In this way of experiencing things, we have something that aligns with things that the Buddha taught. We have from the Udana, "In the seeing, just the seen, in the hearing, just the heard, in the thinking, just the thought," etc. In short, there are just the sensations, the transient sensations, and nothing more, no self to be unified with them, no separate thing perceiving them, just transient causality as it is, where it is, just being itself.” - Daniel M. Ingram

“...the "light" of awareness is in things where they are, including all of the space between/around/through them equally... Said another way, things just are aware/manifest/occurring where they are just as they are, extremely straightforwardly.” - Daniel M. Ingram

“He *(Soh: Daniel Ingram)* is talking about the effortlessness of 'in seeing, just the seen' as primordial awareness of an arahat *(Soh: definition in Daniel M. Ingram’s book, not necessarily in complete alignment with scriptural version).* Anagami is the beginning of seeing, like that of the different levels of one taste *(Soh: the maps of Mahamudra).* **Primordial awareness is realized when one realizes there is no such thing as primordial awareness that is different from the field of transient manifestation.**” - John Tan, 2007

“Thanks for sharing. Although the message carries invaluable advice, it is important not to mistake "seeing things just as they are” as "not forcing oneself to be more than what one is ”. Such ‘growing wisdom’ of teaching us how to deal with ourselves does not make Ananda an Arhat.

In my opinion, it will be more advisable to think that Ananda is pondering over a question similar to what Buddha had taught Bahiya in Bahiya Sutta that ‘in hearing, just the heard’. Ananda struggled hard to penetrate the profound teaching of Buddha, the meaning of Anatta. He finally realized the truth of anatta thereby freeing himself from artificial struggle. There is no Ananda to attain Arhatship. ‘In hearing, it is truly only just sound, no hearer’. Always so regardless of one’s depth of understanding, anatta remains a dharma seal, effortlessly so!

My 2 cents.” – John Tan, 2008, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/01/thusnesss-conversation-between-2004-to.html

“Bāhiya, you should train yourself thus: in the seen will be merely what is seen, ... in the cognized will merely be what is cognized. Practising in this way, Bāhiya, you will not be 'because of that'. When you are not 'because of that', you will not be 'in that'. And when you are not 'in that', you will be neither here nor beyond nor in between the two. Just this is the end of suffering."

What does it mean "you will not be 'because of that'"? The Pāli is na tena. Tena is the instrumental of the word for 'that'. Na is the negative. It means, literally, "not because of that, not through that, not by that". It means in essence, you will not assume that there is a self, a soul, a me; because of, through, or by; the seen or the heard or the sensed or the cognized. The Buddha is saying that once you have penetrated the truth of sensory experience, by suppressing the Hindrances through Jhāna, you will see that there is no 'doer', nor a 'knower', behind sensory experience. No longer will you be able to use sensory experience as evidence for a self. Descartes' famous "I am because I think" is refuted. You will not be because of thinking, nor because of seeing, hearing or sensing. In the Buddha's words, "You will not be because of that (any sensory experience)".

When the sensory processes are discarded as tenable evidence for a self, a soul or a me, then you are no longer located in the sensory experience. In the Buddha's words, "You will not be 'in that'". You no longer view, perceive or even think that there is a 'me' involved in life. In the words of the doctor in the original series of Star Trek, "It is life, Jim, but not as we know it"! There is no longer any sense of self, or soul, at the centre of experience. You are no more 'in that'.

Just to close off the loophole that you might think you can escape non-existence of a self or soul by identifying with a transcendental state of being beyond what is seen, heard, sensed or cognized, the Buddha thunders, "and you will be neither here (with the seen, heard, sensed or cognized) nor beyond (outside of the seen, heard, sensed or cognized) nor in between the two (neither of the world nor beyond the world). The last phrase comprehensively confounded the sophists!

In summary, the Buddha advised both Bāhiya and Venerable Mālunkyaputta to experience the Jhānas to suppress the Five Hindrances. Thereby one will discern with certainty the absence of a self or a soul behind the sensory process. Consequently, sensory experience will never again be taken as evidence of a 'knower' or a 'doer': such that you will never imagine a self or a soul at the centre of experience, nor beyond, nor anywhere else. Bāhiya's Teaching put in a nutshell the way to the realization of No-Self, Anattā. "Just this", concluded the Buddha "is the end of suffering".” – Ajahn Brahmavamso, https://www.dhammatalks.net/Books6/Ajahn_Brahm_BAHIYA_S_TEACHING.htm , also, he explained anatta from 56 minutes onwards in this video (prior to 56 minutes mark, the explanation focuses on cultivating samadhi): https://youtu.be/RYbe7W7XRu8

Although Ajahn Brahmavamso is one of the rare Theravadin masters currently living that is likely to have realised anatta, Soh does not agree that the jhana-first approach is an approach that is suitable for everyone but perhaps for some only, see Jhana / Dhyana

“To have completely cut off all misconceptions regarding the indivisibility of phenomena and mind, and to merge mind and phenomena free of hope and fear is said to happen at the time of the greater level of one taste.” - The Royal Seal of Mahamudra, Khamtrul Rinpoche

Khamtrul Rinpoche on the realization of anatta in the Mahamudra text (recommended reading!):

"At that point, is the observer—awareness—other than the observed—stillness and movement—or is it actually that stillness and movement itself? By investigating with the gaze of your own awareness, you come to understand that that which is investigating itself is also no other than stillness and movement. Once this happens you will experience lucid emptiness as the naturally luminous self-knowing awareness. Ultimately, whether we say nature and radiance, undesirable and antidote, observer and observed, mindfulness and thoughts, stillness and movement, etc., you should know that the terms of each pair are no different from one another; by receiving the blessing of the guru, properly ascertain that they are inseparable. Ultimately, to arrive at the expanse free of observer and observed is the realization realization of the true meaning and the culmination of all analyses. This is called “the view transcending concepts,” which is free of conceptualization, or “the vajra mind view.”

"Fruition vipashyana is the correct realization of the final conviction of the nonduality of observer and observed."

Khamtrul Rinpoche III. The Royal Seal of Mahamudra: Volume One: A Guidebook for the Realization of Coemergence: 1 (p. 242). Shambhala. Kindle Edition.

https://www.amazon.com/.../1559394374/ref=pd_cart_vw_1_2...

John Tan commented on the above verses:

[9:14 PM, 6/20/2020] John Tan: This is not just mere experience.

[9:15 PM, 6/20/2020] John Tan: It sees through the conventions and analysis and realized the emptiness of these conventions...”

“That time there is a text that explains Mahamudra as anatta, in the seen just the seen. I prefer seeing that way.” – John Tan, 2021, referring to the excerpt above by Khamtrul Rinpoche III

Soh wrote to someone in 2020 who expressed non-duality but still reifies Awareness: “Not good enough. Because you establish Buddha nature as being real or truly existing, that is not yet the realization of anatta.

Even the buddha do not see a mind.

This teaching of Mahamudra by the 3rd Karmapa is clear – excerpt from

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/05/wishing-prayer-for-attainment-of.html

All phenomena are illusory displays of mind.
Mind is no mind--the mind's nature is empty of any entity that is mind
Being empty, it is unceasing and unimpeded,
manifesting as everything whatsoever.
Examining well, may all doubts about the ground be discerned and cut.
Naturally manifesting appearances, that never truly exist, are confused into objects. Spontaneous intelligence, under the power of ignorance, is confused into a self.
By the power of this dualistic fixation, beings wander in the realms of samsaric existence.
May ignorance, the root of confusion, he discovered and cut.
It is not existent--even the Victorious Ones do not see it.
It is not nonexistent--it is the basis of all samsara and nirvana.
This is not a contradiction, but the middle path of unity.
May the ultimate nature of phenomena, limitless mind beyond extremes, he realised.
If one says, "This is it," there is nothing to show.
If one says, "This is not it," there is nothing to deny.
The true nature of phenomena,
which transcends conceptual understanding, is unconditioned.
May conviction he gained in the ultimate, perfect truth.
Not realising it, one circles in the ocean of samsara.
If it is realised, buddha is not anything other.
It is completely devoid of any "This is it," or "This is not it."
May this simple secret, this ultimate essence of phenomena,
which is the basis of everything, be realised.
Appearance is mind and emptiness is mind.
Realisation is mind and confusion is mind.
Arising is mind and cessation is mind.
May all doubts about mind be resolved.
Not adulterating meditation with conceptual striving or mentally created meditation,
Unmoved by the winds of everyday busyness,
Knowing how to rest in the uncontrived, natural spontaneous flow,
May the practice of resting in mind's true nature be skilfully sustained.
The waves of subtle and coarse thoughts calm down by themselves in their own place,

And the unmoving waters of mind rest naturally.
Free from dullness, torpor, and, murkiness,
May the ocean of shamatha be unmoving and stable.
Looking again and again at the mind which cannot be looked at,
The meaning which cannot be seen is vividly seen, just as it is.
Thus cutting doubts about how it is or is not,
May the unconfused genuine self-nature he known by self-nature itself.
Looking at objects, the mind devoid of objects is seen;
Looking at mind, its empty nature devoid of mind is seen;
Looking at both of these, dualistic clinging is self-liberated.
May the nature of mind, the clear light nature of what is, be realised.
Free from mental fabrication, it is the great seal, mahamudra.
Free from extremes, it is the great middle way, madhyamika.
The consummation of everything, it is also called the great perfection, dzogchen.
May there be confidence that by understanding one,
the essential meaning of all is realised.
Great bliss free from attachment is unceasing.
Luminosity free from fixation on characteristics is unobscured.
Nonthought transcending conceptual mind is spontaneous presence.”

“I like Mahamudra... beautifully expressed” – John Tan, 2020

"In their confusion, people for no reason conceive an [an entity called] 'mind' within no-mind. Deludedly clinging to [mind's] existence, they perform action upon action, which in turn makes them transmigrate in the six realms and live-and-die without respite. It is as if someone would in the dark mistake a contraption for a ghost or [a rope] for a snake and be gripped by terror. That's just what people's deluded clinging [to a mind] is like. In the midst of no-mind they deludedly cling to a 'mind' and perform action upon action - yet this results in nothing but transmigration through the six realms. If such people come across a great teacher who instructs them in seated meditation, they will awaken to no-mind, and all karmic hindrances will be thoroughly wiped out..." "At this, **the disciple all at once greatly awakened and realized for the first time that there is no thing apart from mind, and no mind apart from things**. All of his actions became utterly free. Having broken through the net of all doubt, he was freed of all obstruction."

- First Patriarch of Ch’an/Zen in China, Bodhidharma, The Doctrine of No Mind by Bodhidharma (无心论）

As the wonderful Zen Master Mazu Daoyi explained (tr. Ferguson, p 76):

A monk asked, “Master, why do you say that mind is Buddha?”
Mazu said, “To stop babies from crying.”

The monk said, “What do you say when they stop crying?”
Mazu said, “No mind, no Buddha.”
The monk asked, “Without using either of these teachings, how would you instruct someone?”
Mazu said, “I would say to him that it’s not a thing.”
The monk asked, “If suddenly someone who was in the midst of it came to you, then what would you do?”
Mazu said, “I would teach him to experience the great way.”

“[8:53 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: In zen though they say there is no mind, they in fact embrace mind more fully than all is mind, until no trace of mind can be detected. Yet [Ven.] Sheng Yen said this is just the entry point of zen because originally there is no mind and this is clearly realized in anatta. So post anatta, mind and phenomena are completely indistinguishable.
If both mind and phenomena are completely indistinguishable in experience, then distinctions are nothing more than conventional designation of empty luminous display.
[8:54 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. btw did sheng yen realise anatta?
[8:55 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: So you must know when we say no awareness, no self, no I, it doesnt mean nothing. It is seeing through the background construct and open the gate to directly taste, experience and effortlessly authenticate clarity.
[8:56 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: I believe so but he did not talk about his experience except the stanza before his death that is beautiful.
[8:57 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: “无事忙中老，空里有哭笑，本来没有我，生死皆可抛” 台湾高僧圣严法师圆寂
(Busy with nothing till old. (无事忙中老)
In emptiness, there is weeping and laughing. (空里有哭笑)
Originally there never was any 'I'. (本来没有我)
Thus life and death can be cast aside. (生死皆可抛)) - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/11/differentiate-wisdom-from-art.html

“Though purifying mind is the essence of practicing the Way, it is not done by clinging at the mind as a glorified and absolute entity. It is not that one simply goes inward by rejecting the external world. It is not that the mind is pure and the world is impure. When mind is clear, the world is a pure-field. When mind is deluded, the world is Samsara. Bodhidharma said,
Seeing with insight, form is not simply form, because form depends on mind. And, mind is not simply mind, because mind depends on form. Mind and form create and negate each other. ... Mind and the world are opposites, appearances arise where they meet. When your mind does not stir inside, the world does not arise outside. When the world and the mind are both transparent, this is the true insight.” (from the Wakeup Discourse)

Just like the masters of Madhyamaka, Bodhidharma too pointed out that mind and form are interdependently arising. Mind and form create each other. Yet, when you cling to form, you negate mind. And, when you cling to mind, you negate form. Only when such dualistic notions are dissolved, and only when both mind and the world are transparent (not turning to obstructing concepts) the true insight arises.

In this regard, Bodhidharma said,
Using the mind to look for reality is delusion.
Not using the mind to look for reality is awareness.
(from the Wakeup Discourse)

So, to effectively enter the Way, one has to go beyond the dualities (conceptual constructs) of mind and form. As far as one looks for reality as an object of mind, one is still trapped in the net of delusion (of seeing mind and form as independent realities), never breaking free from it. In that way, one holds reality as something other than oneself, and even worse, one holds oneself as a spectator to a separate reality!

When the mind does not stir anymore and settles into its pristine clarity, the world does not stir outside. The reality is revealed beyond the divisions of Self and others, and mind and form. Thus, as you learn not to use the mind to look for reality and simply rests in the natural state of mind as it is, there is the dawn of pristine awareness – knowing reality as it is, non-dually and non-conceptually.

When the mind does not dissolve in this way to its original clarity, whatever one sees is merely the stirring of conceptuality. Even if we try to construct a Buddha’s mind, it only stirs and does not see reality. Because, the Buddha’s mind is simply the uncompounded clarity of Bodhi (awakening), free from stirring and constructions. So, Bodhidharma said,
That which ordinary knowledge understands is also said to be within the boundaries of the norms. When you do not produce the mind of a common man, or the mind of a sravaka or a bodhisattva, and when you do not even produce a Buddha-mind or any mind at all, then for the first time you can be said to have gone outside the boundaries of the norms. If no mind at all arises, and if you do not produce understanding nor give rise to delusion, then, for the first time, you can be said to have gone outside of everything. (From the Record #1, of the Collection of Bodhidharma’s Works3 retrieved from Dunhuang Caves)

- Dzogchen teacher Abhaya Devi Way of Bodhi

"So what is one mind, what is no mind and what is original mind in this context? One mind is post non-dual but subsuming leaving trace. No mind is just one mind except that there is evenness till the last trace is gone. Like what explains in the text. Uji... all is time therefore no time. When you go from dual to non dual or one mind to no mind, those are stages and experiences... If you got the condition to get pointed out that originally there never was a mind, there are no stages to climb... that is original mind. This requires insights and wisdom." - John Tan, 2020

1st Zen/Ch’an Patriarch in China, Bodhidharma:

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/11/the-doctrine-of-no-mind-by-bodhidharma.html

“The student asks the Reverend, "[Do you] have a mind or not?"
"[I] have no mind."
3
"Since you say that you have no mind: who then has the ability to see, hear, feel, and know? Who knows that there is no mind?"
"Just no-mind is seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing. And it is no-mind that has the ability to be aware of the absence of mind."
4

"If one accepts that there is no mind, it must follow that there is no seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing. Say: how can there be any seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing [without mind]?"
"Though I have no mind, I can ver[y] well [1269b] see and hear and feel and know."
5

...

"But how could one [even] gain the ability to know that it is no-mind [that sees, hears, feels, and knows]?"
"Just try to find out in every detail: What appearance does mind have? And if it can be apprehended: is [what is apprehended] mind or not? Is [mind] inside or outside, or somewhere in between? As long as one looks for mind in these three locations, one's search will end in failure. Indeed, searching it anywhere will end in failure. That's exactly why it is known as no-mind."
7
"Reverend, since you have said that all is no-mind, neither evil nor meritorious deeds ought to exist. So why are people transmigrating in the six spheres of existence, ceaselessly embroiled in life-and-death?"
"In their confusion, people for no reason conceive an [an entity called] 'mind' within no-mind. Deludedly clinging to [mind's] existence, they perform action upon action, which in turn makes them transmigrate in the six realms and live-and-die without respite. It is as if someone would in the dark mistake a contraption for a ghost or [a rope] for a snake and be gripped by terror. That's just what people's deluded clinging [to a mind] is like. In the midst of no-mind they deludedly cling to a 'mind' and perform action upon action - yet this results in nothing but transmigration through the six realms. If such people come across a great teacher who instructs them in seated meditation, they will awaken to no-mind, and all karmic hindrances will be thoroughly wiped out and [the chain of] life-and-death cut through. Just as all darkness disappears with a single ray of sunlight that penetrates it, awakening to no-mind wipes out all evil karma."

....

"At present, I am involved in [dualistic] mind; so how should I practice?"
"Just be totally aware in all affairs! No-mind is nothing other than practice; there is no other practice. Thus you'll realize that no-mind is everything, and that extinction (nirvana) is nothing other than no-mind."
12
At this, the disciple all at once greatly awakened and realized for the first time that there is no thing apart from mind, and no mind apart from things. All of his actions became utterly free. Having broken through the net of all doubt, he was freed of all obstruction.”

From Dzogchen teacher Jamgon Mipham:
https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../madhyamaka...
“...In the cycle of teachings of Maitreya and the writings of the great charioteer Asaṅga, whose thinking is one and the same, it is taught that individuals on the level of earnest aspiration first understand that all phenomena are simply the

mind. Subsequently they have the experience that there is no object to be apprehended in the mind. Then, at the stage of the supreme mundane level on the path of joining, they realize that because there is no object, **neither is there a subject, and immediately after that, they attain the first level with the direct realization of the truth of ultimate reality devoid of the duality of subject and object.** As for things being only the mind, the source of the dualistic perception of things appearing as environment, sense objects, and a body is the consciousness of the ground of all, which is accepted as existing substantially on the conventional level but is taught as being like a magical illusion and so on since it appears in a variety of ways while not existing dualistically. For this reason, because this tradition realizes, perfectly correctly, that the nondual consciousness is devoid of any truly existing entities and of characteristics, the ultimate intentions of the charioteers of Madhyamaka and Cittamātra should be considered as being in agreement... ...So, if this so-called “self-illuminating nondual consciousness” asserted by the Cittamātrins is understood to be a consciousness that is the ultimate of all dualistic consciousnesses, and it is merely that its subject and object are inexpressible, and **if such a consciousness is understood to be truly existent and not intrinsically empty, then it is something that has to be refuted**. If, on the other hand, that consciousness is understood to be unborn from the very beginning (i.e. empty), to be directly experienced by reflexive awareness, and to be self-illuminating gnosis without subject or object, it is something to be established....”

“To carry yourself forward
and experience myriad things is delusion.
That myriad things come forth
and experience themselves is awakening.”
- Zen Master Dogen (Genjokoan)

“The Buddha said, "It is just the dharmas that combine to form this body. When it arises, it is simply the dharmas arising; when it ceases, it is simply the dharmas ceasing. When these dharmas arise, [the bodhisattva] does not state, 'I arise'; when these dharmas cease, he does not state, 'I cease'." "In prior thought moments and subsequent thought moments, the moments do not relate to each other; in prior dharmas and subsequent dharmas, the dharmas do not oppose each other. This is called the ocean seal Samadhi.”

- Zen Master Mazu Daoyi

“The ultimate meaning means to be devoid of a person. The meaning of being devoid of a person is the ineffable meaning. The ineffable meaning is the meaning of dependent arising. The meaning of dependent arising is the meaning of the Dharma. The meaning of the Dharma is the meaning of the Tathāgata. Hence it is said, ‘One who sees dependent arising sees the Dharma; one who sees the Dharma sees the Tathāgata.’ And he sees in such a way that, when he searches, he does not see anything whatsoever. In that respect, Mañjuśrī, what is anything whatsoever? It is the mind and the point of reference. When one does not see the mind and the point of reference, one then sees reality. In this way, the Tathāgata has realized, through their very sameness, that all these dharmas are equal. [130]” - The Ornament of the Light of Awareness that Enters the Domain of All Buddhas https://read.84000.co/translation/toh100.html

Āryākṣayamatinirdeśa-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra:

'Any sūtrānta which explains in a variety of different terms a self, a sentient being, a living being, a personality, a person, an individual, one born from a human, a human, an agent, an experiencer — teaching an owner in what is ownerless — those sutras are called "of provisional meaning". Any sūtrānta which teaches emptiness, the signless, the wishless, the unconditioned, the non-arisen, the unproduced, the insubstantial, the non-existence of self, the non-existence of sentient beings, the non-existence of living beings, the non-existence of individuals, the non-existence of an owner up to the doors of liberation, those are called "definitive meaning". This is taught in the sūtrāntas of of definitive meaning but is not taught in the sūtrāntas of the provisional meaning.'

Also, taken from Malcolm's Dharmawheel signature:

[A]nything at all that is well spoken is the word of the Buddha.

-- Ārya-adhyāśaya-sañcodana-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra

The different sūtras in accord with the emptiness
taught by the Sugata are definitive in meaning;
One can understand that all of those Dharmas in
which a sentient being, individual, or person are taught are provisional in meaning.

-- Samadhirāja Sūtra

"Do not rely on the person, rely on the teaching, do not rely on the words, rely on the meaning, do not rely on the provisional, rely on the definitive, do not rely on consciousness (vijñana), rely on primordial wisdom (jñana)"
-- Akshayamati-nirdesha sutra.

“Kyle Dixon:

level 3
krodha
3 points · 2 years ago
I thought that some of the sutras were by advanced practicioners those who became bodhisatvas after the death of the Buddha.
Sure, but in Mahāyāna the "Buddha" is not relegated to the historical figure, Śākyamuni, and in fact the Mahāyāna sūtras state that the "Buddha" should not be seen as name and form at all. Which means the definition of the Buddha is not limited to the historical figure.
For this reason "buddhavacana" or "the word of the Buddha" in Mahāyāna becomes whatever is "said well", meaning an exposition that accords with the fundamental principles of karma, rebirth, dependent origination, bodhicitta, etc.

This is because the Buddha is not name and form, meaning the Buddha is not the rūpakāya, but rather the Buddha is the nature of your mind, the dharmakāya.”

Acarya Malcolm wrote in 2006:

“Here, the Nirvana sutra clearly and precisely states that buddha-svabhaava, the "nature of a Buddha" refers not to an actual nature but a potential. Why, it continues:

"Child of the lineage, I have said that ‘curd exists in milk’, because curd is produced from milk, it is called ‘curd’.

Child of lineage, at the time of milk, there is no curd, also there is no butter, ghee or ma.n.da, because the curd arises from milk with the conditions of heat, impurities, etc., milk is said to have the ‘curd-nature’."

So one must be quite careful not to make an error. The Lanka states unequivocably that the tathagatagarbha doctrine is merely a device to lead those who grasp at a true self the inner meaning of the Dharma, non-arising, the two selflessnesses and so on, and explains the meaning of the literal examples some people constantly err about:

"Similarly, that tathaagatagarbha taught in the suutras spoken by the Bhagavan, since the completely pure luminous clear nature is completely pure from the beginning, possessing the thirty two marks, the Bhagavan said it exists inside of the bodies of sentient beings.

When the Bhagavan described that– like an extremely valuable jewel thoroughly wrapped in a soiled cloth, is thoroughly wrapped by cloth of the aggregates, aayatanas and elements, becoming impure by the conceptuality of the thorough conceptuality suppressed by the passion, anger and ignorance – as permanent, stable and eternal, how is the Bhagavan’s teaching this as the tathaagatagarbha is not similar with as the assertion of self of the non-Buddhists?

Bhagavan, the non-Buddhists make assertion a Self as “A permanent creator, without qualities, pervasive and imperishable”.

The Bhagavan replied:

“Mahaamati, my teaching of tathaagatagarbha is not equivalent with the assertion of the Self of the non-Buddhists.

Mahaamati, the Tathaagata, Arhat, Samyak Sambuddhas, having demonstrated the meaning of the words "emptiness, reality limit, nirvana, non-arisen, signless", etc. as tathaagatagarbha for the purpose of the immature complete forsaking the perishable abodes, demonstrate the expertiential range of the non-appearing abode of complete non-conceptuality by demonstrating the door of tathaagatagarbha.

Mahaamati, a self should not be perceived as real by Bodhisattva Mahaasattvas enlightened in the future or presently.

Mahaamati, for example, a potter, makes one mass of atoms of clay into various kinds containers from his hands, craft, a stick, thread and effort.

Mahaamati, similarly, although Tathaagatas avoid the nature of conceptual selflessness in dharmas, they also appropriately demonstrate tathaagatagarbha or demonstrate emptiness by various kinds [of demonstrations] possessing prajñaa and skillful means; like a potter, they demonstrate with various enumerations of words and letters. As such, because of that,

Mahaamati, the demonstration of Tathaagatagarbha is not similar with the Self demonstrated by the non-Buddhists.

Mahaamati, the Tathaagatas as such, in order to guide those grasping to assertions of the Self of the Non-Buddhists, will demonstrate tathaagatagarbha with the demonstration of tathaagatagarbha. How else will the sentient beings who have fallen into a conceptual view of a True Self, possess the thought to abide in the three liberations and quickly attain the complete manifestation of Buddha in unsurpassed perfect, complete enlightenment?"

Thus, the Lanka says:

All yaanas are included
in five dharmas, three natures,
eight consciousnesses,
and two selflessnesses

It does not add anything about a true self and so on.

If one accepts that tathaagatagarbha is the aalayavij~naana, and one must since it is identified as such, then one is accepting that it is conditioned and afflicted and evolves, thus the Lanka states:

Tathaagatagarbha, known as ‘the all-base consciousness’, is to be completely purified.

Mahaamati, if what is called the all-base consciousness were (37/a) not connected to the tathaagatagarbha, because the tathaagatagarbha would not be ‘the all-base consciousness’, although it would be not be engaged, it also would not evolve; Mahaamati, it is engaged by both the childish and Aaryas, that also evolves.

Because great yogins, the ones not abandoning effort, abide with blissful conduct in this at the time of personally knowing for themselves...the tathaagatagarbha-all basis consciousness is the sphere of the Tathaagatas; it is the object which also is the sphere of teachers, [those] of detailed and learned inclinations like you, and Bodhisattva Mahaasattvas of analytic intellect.

And:

Although tathaagatagarbha
possesses seven consciousnesses;
always engaged with dualistic apprehensions
[it] will evolve with thorough understanding.

If one accepts that the tathaagatagarbha is unconditioned and so on, and one must, since it is identified as such other sutras state:

"`Saariputra, the element of sentient beings denotes the word tathaagatagarbha.
`Saariputra, that word ‘tathaagatagarbha’ denotes Dharmakaaya.

And:

`Saariputra, because of that, also the element of sentient beings is not one thing and the Dharmakaaya another; the element of sentient beings itself is Dharmakaaya; Dharmakaaya itself is the element of sentient beings.

Then one cannot accept it as the aalayavij~naana-- or worse, one must somehow imagine that something conditioned somehow becomes conditioned.

Other sutras state that tathaagatagarbha is the citta, as the Angulimaala suutra does here:

"Although in the `Sraavakayaana it is shown as ‘mind’, the meaning of the teaching is ‘tathaagatagarbha’; whatever mind is naturally pure, that is called ‘tathaagatagarbha’.

So, one must understand that these sutras are provisional and definitive, each giving different accounts of the tathaagatagarbha for different students, but they are not defintive. Understood improperly, they lead one into a non-Buddhist extremes. Understood and explained properly, they lead those afraid of the profound Praj~naapaaramitaa to understanding it's sublime truth. In other words, the Buddha nature teaching is just a skillful means as the Nirvana sutra states

"Child of the lineage, buddha-nature is like this; although the ten powers and the four fearlessnesses, compassion, and the three foundations of mindfulness are the three aspects existing in sentient beings; [those] will be newly seen when defilements are thoroughly conquered. The possessors of perversion will newly attain the ten powers (44/b) and four fearlessness, great compassion and three foundations of mindfulness having thoroughly conquered perversion.

Because that is the purpose as such, I teach buddha-nature always exists in all sentient beings.

When one can compare and contrast all of these citations, and many more side by side, with the proper reading of the Uttataratantra, one will see the propositions about these doctrines by the Dark Zen fools and others of their ilk are dimmed like stars at noon.”

.....

Lankavatara Sutra then states:
"O Mahāmati, with a view to casting aside the heterodox theory, you must treat the tathāgatagarbha as not self (anātman).”

Anatman is taught not just in Mahayana sutras, but is also a central theme in the earliest canon, the Pali canon, the basis of the Theravada tradition of Buddhism.

Buddha in Yamaka Sutta:
https://suttacentral.net/sn22.85/en/bodhi
“What do you think, friend Yamaka, is form permanent or impermanent?”—“Impermanent, friend.”...—“Therefore ... Seeing thus ... He understands: ‘... there is no more for this state of being.’
“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard form as the Tathagata?”—“No, friend.”—“Do you regard feeling ... perception ... volitional formations ... consciousness as the Tathagata?”—“No, friend.”
“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard the Tathagata as in form?”—“No, friend.”—“Do you regard the Tathagata as apart from form?”—“No, friend.”—“Do you regard the Tathagata as in feeling? As apart from feeling? As in perception? As apart from perception? As in volitional formations? As apart from volitional formations? As in consciousness? As apart from consciousness?”—“No, friend.”
“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness taken together as the Tathagata?”—“No, friend.”
“What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard the Tathagata as one who is without form, without feeling, without perception, without volitional formations, without consciousness?”—“No, friend.”
“But, friend, when the Tathagata is not apprehended by you as real and actual here in this very life, is it fitting for you to declare: ‘As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a bhikkhu whose taints are destroyed is annihilated and perishes with the breakup of the body and does not exist after death’?””

Buddha in Anuradha Sutta:
"Then, Anuraadha, since in this very life the Tathaagata is not to be regarded as really and truly existing, is it proper for you to declare of him: 'Friends, he who is a Tathaagata... can be described otherwise than in these four ways...'?"[5]
"No indeed, Lord."
"Good, good, Anuraadha. As before, so now I proclaim just suffering and the ceasing of suffering." - https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn22/sn22.086.wlsh.html

Arahant Vajira in Vajira Sutta:

“Why do you believe there’s such a thing as a ‘sentient being’?
Māra, is this your theory?
This is just a pile of conditions,
you won’t find a sentient being here.
When the parts are assembled
we use the word ‘chariot’.
So too, when the aggregates are present
‘sentient being’ is the convention we use.
But it’s only suffering that comes to be,
lasts a while, then disappears.
Naught but suffering comes to be,
naught but suffering ceases.” - Vajira Sutta

The Realization of Dependent Designation of Sravaka Arhats

[7/7/24, 5:54:03 PM] John Tan: Do u know that contemplating dependent arising must ultimately lead to dependent designation?
[7/7/24, 6:33:15 PM] John Tan: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3wvQm1DnFxdKDx74f1P0lLNxN1c-Hruc&si=OD0jIAG62vWAEc3O
[7/7/24, 7:19:37 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah..
[7/7/24, 7:19:59 PM] Soh Wei Yu: But only prasangika madhyamaka realizes it right, lower tenets up to yogacara and maybe some madhyamaka arent totally clear
[7/7/24, 7:21:03 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Even then the sravaka arhat must have realised some degree of dependent designation like vajira expressed:
[7/7/24, 7:21:31 PM] John Tan: I suppose so. What did he say?
[7/7/24, 7:21:36 PM] Soh Wei Yu: “Why do you believe there’s such a thing as a ‘sentient being’?

Māra, is this your theory?

This is just a pile of conditions,

you won’t find a sentient being here.

When the parts are assembled

we use the word ‘chariot’.

So too, when the aggregates are present

‘sentient being’ is the convention we use.

But it’s only suffering that comes to be,

lasts a while, then disappears.

Naught but suffering comes to be,

naught but suffering ceases.” - Vajira Sutta (https://suttacentral.net/sn5.10/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=plain&reference=none&notes=asterisk&highlight=false&script=latin)
[7/7/24, 7:22:11 PM] John Tan: Wow👍
[7/7/24, 7:23:17 PM] John Tan: Yes, only lack two folds.
[7/7/24, 7:23:46 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I see.. yeah non arising of aggregates isnt taught
[7/7/24, 7:27:40 PM] John Tan: It doesn't mean because they are conventionally designated, it doesn't exist ultimately and is not important. This is essential mode of thinking.

Because there are no inherently existing things, that is y nominal existence become important.

Comments by Soh:

There's another famous Sravaka Arhat - Nagasena, who taught and elaborated on the insight of chariot and dependent designation. Nagasena's writing was what triggered in John Tan a preliminary insight into Emptiness decades ago. See: +A and -A Emptiness and The Questions of King Milinda (As Answered by the Arahant, Nagasena)

Labels: Anatta, Dependent Designation, Dependent Origination, Emptiness |

"Anātman is more accurately that there is no “car” as such. The car, as an entity, that is conventionally imputed onto an appearance, but that appearance does not contain nor create a car at any time.

In order for there to be change or fluctuation, there would have to first be an entity to change, but if alleged persons, places and things are scrutinized, no entity can be found.

Read Candrakīrti’s exposition on the chariot. “Things” are not even made of parts. Things cannot actually be found.

Nevertheless, in our normal, everyday relative condition, we accept the appearance of things are conventionally valid because they function and behave in ways that conform with a popular consensus." - Kyle Dixon, https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/iqedjp/am_i_understanding_the_buddhist_concept_of_no/

“ESTABLISHING THE INNER PERCEIVER AS WELL AS THE INDIVIDUAL SELF TO BE DEVOID OF A SELF-NATURE

The Lamrim Yeshe Nyingpo root text says:

The mind that observes is also devoid of an ego or a self-entity.
It is neither seen as something different from the aggregates
Nor as identical with these five aggregates.
If the first were true, there would exist some other substance.
This is not the case, so were the second to be true,
That would contradict a permanent self, since the aggregates are impermanent.
Therefore, based on the five aggregates,
The self is a mere imputation by the power of ego-clinging.

Although the outer observed objects possess no true existence, doesn’t the inner observer, the mind, truly exist? No, it doesn’t.

The mind has no existence apart from imputing such an existence upon the perpetuating aggregates and holding the belief in an ego, with the thought “I am!” Since the two kinds of self-entity are not separate from that, neither can their existence be established when examined by correct discriminating knowledge.

When there is a belief in an “I” or a “self” it follows that its existence cannot be ultimately established, because it neither differs from nor is identical with the five aggregates.

If, as in the first case, you could prove that there is a separately existing self, there would have to be a sixth aggregate of a substance different from the other five.

Since such a knowable object is impossible, it would be like the name of the son of a barren woman. If the self were identical [with the five aggregates], then it would have to be of identical substance and, since the five aggregates have substantial existence while the belief in an “I” has imputed existence, their substances would be contradictory, like the concrete and inconcrete.

Again, to describe this in an easily understandable way: since the self cannot be observed as being some entity that is separate from the gathering of the five aggregates and also cannot be seen as being identical with them, the existence of the self cannot be established. In the first instance, [it is impossible for] the self to have any existence separate from the aggregates, because an additional sixth aggregate would then have to exist, because ego-clinging applies to nothing other than the aggregates.

Moreover, as no concrete thing exists separate from the characteristics of the aggregates and, as an inconcrete thing cannot perform a function, the self cannot be established as existing separate from them.

Though the self does not exist separately in that way, can’t its existence be established, as in the second case, as identical with the aggregates? No, it cannot, because their characteristics are incompatible. In other words, all the aggregates are conditioned and therefore proven to be impermanent.

This is contrary to the self, which is held to be permanent, as in the case of assuming that one knows now what one saw earlier. Furthermore, the aggregates are composed of categories with many divisions, such as forms, sensations, and so forth, while the self is believed to be singular, as in thinking “I am!” And finally, the aggregates verifiably depend on arising and perishing, while the self is obviously experienced to be independent, as in the thought “I am!” The Prajnamula describes this:

If the self were the aggregates,
Then it would arise and perish.
But, if the self is different from the aggregates,
It would have none of the aggregates’ characteristics.

You may now wonder, “Though the self does not exist, its continuity is permanent and can be proven to exist.” That is also not the case. The Two Truths says:

The so-called continuity or instant
Is false, just like a chain, an army, and so forth.

While in reality possessing not even the slightest existence, the self, the individual, and so forth, are merely imputations made by the power of ego-clinging and are simply based upon the gathering of the five perpetuating aggregates.

Entering the Middle Way teaches:

The self does therefore not exist as something other than the aggregates,
Because it is not held as anything besides the aggregates.279
And again, in the same text:
When uttering such words as “the aggregates are the self,”
It refers to the gathering of the aggregates and not to their identity.

The word “chariot,” for instance, is merely a label given to the gathering of parts, such as the wheels and the main beam of the chariot, while you find no basis for the characteristics of the chariot that is not the parts but the owner of the parts. In the same way, you cannot prove the basis for the so-called self besides the mere belief that the ego is the gathering of the aggregates.

This is described in a sutra:

Just as the name “chariot” is given to the gathering of all the parts,
Similarly, the name “sentient being” is superficially used for the aggregates.

Padmasambhava - The Light of Wisdom VOLUME I - Rangjung Yeshe Publications”

“In mustering the whole body and mind and seeing forms,
in mustering the whole body and mind
and hearing sounds,
they are intimately perceived;
but it is not like the reflection in a mirror,
nor like the moon in the water.
When one side is realized the other side is dark.”
- Dogen (Genjokoan, commentary in Flowers Fall)

All Things Have One Nature, That Is, No Nature

John Tan and I like this excerpt.

John Tan:
“I really like this article from Jay Garfield expressing "emptiness of emptiness" as:

1. The everydayness of everyday.

2. Penetrating to the depth of being, we find ourselves back to the surface of things.

3. There is nothing after all beneath these deceptive surfaces.

Also concisely and precisely expressed the key insight of anatta in ATR.”

“That is what I always thought is the key insight of Tsongkhapa also. Like the phases of insights in ATR through contemplating no-self (a negation), one directly and non-dually tastes the vivid appearances.”

The excerpt:

“Now, since all things are empty, all things lack any ultimate nature, and this is a characterization of what things are like from the ultimate perspective. Thus, ultimately, things are empty. But emptiness is, by definition, the lack of any essence or ultimate nature. Nature, or essence, is just what empty things are empty of. Hence, ultimately, things must

lack emptiness. To be ultimately empty is, ultimately, to lack emptiness. In other words, emptiness is the nature of all things; by virtue of this they have no nature, not even emptiness. As Nagarjuna puts it in his autocommentary to the Vigrahavyavartanı, quoting lines from the Astasahasrika-prajnaparamita-sutra: “All things have one nature, that is, no nature.”

Nagarjuna’s enterprise is one of fundamental ontology, and the conclusion he comes to is that fundamental ontology is impossible. But that is a fundamentally ontological conclusion—and that is the paradox. There is no way that things are ultimately, not even that way. The Indo-Tibetan tradition, following the Vimalakırtinirdesa-sutra, hence repeatedly advises one to learn to “tolerate the groundlessness of things.” The emptiness of emptiness is the fact that not even emptiness exists ultimately, that it is also dependent, conventional, nominal, and, in the end, that it is just the everydayness of the everyday. Penetrating to the depths of being, we find ourselves back on the surface of things, and so discover that there is nothing, after all, beneath these deceptive surfaces. Moreover, what is deceptive about them is simply the fact that we take there to be ontological depths lurking just beneath.”

Jay Garfield & Graham Priest, in "Nagarjuna and the limits of thought"

(Source of text: https://files.awakeningtoreality.com/N%20g%20rjuna%20and%20the%20Limits%20of%20Thought.pdf)

[4:43 pm, 26/09/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oh nice didnt know you posted
[4:45 pm, 26/09/2021] John Tan: Yes so well expressed. How can I not post it. 🤣
Labels: Anatta, Emptiness, Jay L. Garfield, John Tan, Madhyamaka, Tsongkhapa 0 comments | |

"Buddhism is all its forms is strictly nominalist, and rejects all universals (samanya-artha) as being unreal abstractions." - Loppon Namdrol/Malcolm

"If you imagine there is really some transpersonal overmind, you are far outside the Buddha's teachings." - Loppon Namdrol/Malcolm

"The difference between Buddhism and K. Shaivism (but not the only difference) is that in Dharma there is no apophatic absolute. This kind of absolute is completely absent in Buddhadharma, despite the fact that many people import their absolutist any d theistic misconceptions into their understanding of Dharma." - Loppon Namdrol/Malcolm

“In Dogen’s view, the only reality is reality that is actually experienced as particular things at specific times. There is no “tile nature” apart from actual “tile forms,” there is no “essential Baso” apart from actual instances of “Baso experience.” When Baso sits in zazen, “zazen” becomes zazen, and “Baso” becomes Baso. Real

instances of Baso sitting in zazen is real instances of Baso and real instances of zazen – when Baso eats rice, Baso is really Baso and eating rice is really eating rice.”

- Ted Biringer, https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2017/11/zazen-polishing-tile-to-make-mirror.html

“While it may be contrary to the suggestions of many that claim to represent Zen or Dogen, true nature, according to the classic Zen records (including Shobogenzo) is ever and always immediately present, particular, and precise. Notions or assertions suggesting that Zen is somehow mysterious, ineffable, or inexpressible are simply off the mark. The only place such terms can be accurately applied in Zen is to definite mysteries, particular unknowns, and specific inexpressible experiences. Indeed, in Zen, the terms definite, particular, and specific accurately characterize all dharmas. Dogen’s refrain, ‘Nothing in the whole universe is concealed’ means exactly what it says; no reality is the least bit obscure or vague. To emphasize this truth, the assertion that ‘real form is all dharmas’ runs like a mantra throughout Shobogenzo, for example:

“The realization of the Buddhist patriarchs is perfectly realized real form. Real form is all dharmas. All dharmas are forms as they are, natures as they are, body as it is, the mind as it is, the world as it is, clouds and rain as they are, walking, standing, sitting, and lying down, as they are; sorrow and joy, movement and stillness, as they are; a staff and a whisk, as they are; a twirling flower and a smiling face, as they are; succession of the Dharma and affirmation, as they are; learning in practice and pursuing the truth, as they are; the constancy of pines and the integrity of bamboos, as they are. Shobogenzo, Shoho-Jisso[199]” – Ted Biringer

“It is extremely difficult to express what is ‘Isness’. Isness is awareness as forms. It is a pure sense of presence yet encompassing the ‘transparent concreteness’ of forms. There is a crystal clear sensations of awareness manifesting as the manifold of phenomenal existence. If we are vague in the experiencing of this ‘transparent concreteness’ of Isness, it is always due to that ‘sense of self’ creating the sense of division... ...you must stress the ‘form’ part of awareness. It is the ‘forms’, it is the ‘things’.” - John Tan, 2007

“In light of Shobogenzo’s (hence Zen’s) vision of existence-time (uji), existence (ontology; being) and time are not-two (nondual); dharmas are not simply existents in time, they are existents of time, and (all) time is in and of existents (i.e. dharmas). In short, dharmas do not exist independent of time, and time does not exist independent of dharmas. On a corollary note, since (all) existence demonstrates the quality of ‘impermanence,’ time too is impermanent. In Zen the nonduality of impermanence and time is treated in terms of ‘ceaseless advance’ or ‘ever passing’ – ‘ceaseless’ and ‘ever’ connoting ‘permanence’ or ‘eternity,’
‘advance’ and ‘passing’ indicating ‘impermanence’ or ‘temporal’ (temporary). Accordingly, ‘impermanence’ is ‘permanent’ and ‘change’ is ‘changeless’ – existence-time ever-always (eternally) advances (changes).[92] Dogen’s vision of reality exploits the significance of this to the utmost, unfolding its most profound implications with his notion of ‘the self-obstruction of a single dharma’ or ‘the total exertion of a single dharma’ (ippo gujin). This notion reveals a number of important implications concerning the nature of existence-time; two of which are: Each and all dharmas reveal, disclose, or present the whole universe (the totality of existence-time). Each and all dharmas are

inherently infinite and eternal.” - Biringer, Ted. Zen Cosmology: Dogen's Contribution to the Search for a New Worldview (p. 34). Kindle Edition.

“**Immediate Present, Ultimate Dharma**

Since our activity is not a progression from delusion to enlightenment made solely by the independent self, Dogen defines the first thought of practice as 'immediate present ultimate Dharma' or genjokoan: the presence and perfection of all dharmas as they are in the here-and-now.' Hee-Jin Kim further explains the meaning of genjokoan:

'It does not suggest an evolutionary ascent from hidden-ness to manifestation, or from imperfection to perfection, or conversely, an emanational descent from one to many, or from reality to appearance. Rather, things, events, beings are already unmistakably what they truly are; what is more, they are vibrant, transparent, and bright in their as-they-are-ness.'” - Zen teacher Shinshu Roberts

“All Buddhas and all things cannot be reduced to a static entity or principle symbolized as one mind, one nature, or the like. This guards against views that devaluate the unique, irreplaceable individuality of a single dharma.” - Hee-Jin Kim, Flowers of Emptiness, p.257

“I was having a conversation with someone today (he had some history with various practices, vipassana, actual freedom, and recently came across a famous Thai ajahn, etc) who shared about an experience of dissolving into centerless space. I told him what I call anatta is not just being centerless, it is the effulgence and radiance of the transience. And John Tan concurs with me on this point. That is, regardless of any realization of no-self, and no matter how centerless one feels or how centerless is one's experience of awareness and so forth... still, anything short of direct realization of the radiance or luminosity as the very stuff of transiency is still not what I call the realization of anatta. (And that too is also just an aspect of anatta, and furthermore not yet into the twofold emptying)”
- Soh, 2018, Actual Freedom and the Immediate Radiance in the Transience

Soh Wei Yu is at Gardens by the Bay.
JuotSplyu 1sgolnu2,s Sour2cSr020coenld · Singapore ·
Shared with Your friends

At this time, everything in the Universe in the ten directions - soil, earth, grass, and trees; fences, walls, tiles and pebbles - perform the Buddha’s work... The grass, trees, soil, earth reached by this guiding influence all radiate great brightness, and their preaching of the deep and fine dharma is without end.
~ Zen Master Dogen

19 Comments

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John Tan
Coincidentally I was watching anime 斗罗大陆, it expresses the experience and taste of total exertion beautifully. I can feel for the character where his clarity loses every trace into the natural radiance and purity of the trees, the flowing river, the wind, the smell and the light.

5
□ □ ·
Reply

□ · 48w

As John Tan wrote in 2009, it is important to have “an effective way to allow practitioners to have adequate experience of the vividness, realness and presence of Awareness and the full experience of these qualities in the transience. Without which it will not be easy to realize that "the arising and passing sensations are the very awareness itself." A balance is therefore needed, otherwise practitioners may experience equanimity but skew towards dispassion and lack realization."

“The actual experience of enlightenment comes springing forth in the realm of true oneness. And with that, one sometimes cries out in astonishment. One becomes aware that the whole universe is just the single seamless stupa. It's not some simplistic kind of thing like a reflection in a mirror.

"Mountains and rivers are not seen in a mirror." It's not that mountains, rivers, and the earth are reflected in one's mind-mirror. That's okay when we are using metaphors for thoughts and consciousness. But what we are speaking of now is the realm of the actual experience of enlightenment. The self is the mountains, rivers, and earth; the self is the sun and moon and the stars.

The great earth has not
A single lick of soil;
New Year's first smile.

"Not another person in the whole universe." One side is all there is, without a second or third to be found anywhere. If one calls this subject, everything is subject and that's all. There is no object anywhere. It's the true mind-only. It's snatching away away the objective world but not the person. If one calls this object, everything is object and that's all. There is no subject anywhere. It's snatching away the person but not the objective world. It's the true matter-only. Whichever one you say, only the label changes and it is the same thing. While Dogen Zenji calls this completely self, he also calls it completely other. It's all self. It's all other. This is the meaning of "when one side is realized the other side is dark." This is also called "one side exhausts everything." It's the whole thing, being complete with one, exhausting

everything with one." - Hakuun Yasutani, "Flowers Fall" (see excerpts in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/04/hakuun-yasutani-flowers-fall-commentary.html)

"When there is an appearance of a form in the field of the eyes,
that appearance of form itself is one’s mind; the apparent
form and emptiness are not two. By resting gently right on
the form without grasping, subject and object become naturally
liberated. The same applies to sounds, smells, tastes,
textures, as well as mental occurrences: by resting on the
occurrence itself, it becomes self-liberated. That is to say,
instead of meditating on cognizance, by meditating without
grasping right on the outer objects of the six sense perceptions,
the six senses arise as meditation and enhancement
will ensue." - Lord Gotsangpa as quoted by Khamtrul Rinpoche, The Royal Seal of Mahamudra (see excerpts in https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2015/12/self-liberation-by-khamtrul-rinpoche-iii.html)

Xue Feng said, “To comprehend this matter, it is similar to the ancient mirror – Hu comes, Hu appears; Han comes, Han appears.” Xuan Sha heard this and said, “Suddenly the mirror is broken, then how?” “Hu and Han both disappear.” Xuan Sha said, “Old monk’s heels have not touched ground yet.” Jian says instead, “Hu and Han are actualized/manifest.”

- http://www.yogichen.org/cw/cw45/b0050ch04.html

Seppo: “My concrete state is like one face of the eternal mirror. When a foreigner comes, a foreigner appears. When a Chinaman comes, a Chinaman appears. Gensa: If suddenly a clear mirror comes along, what then? Seppo: The foreigner and the Chinaman both become invisible. Gensa: I am not like that. Seppo: How is it in your case...If a clear mirror comes along, what then? Gensa: Smashed into hundreds of bits and pieces.” Dôgen comments: “...the truth should be expressed like that.”

- http://www.milwaukeezencenter.org/final/Newsletters/mzc_news_9-07.pdf

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禅宗有个公案，僧问大同曰：“天上天下唯我独尊，如何是我？”，大曰：“推倒老师有什么过？”健曰：“往往有等禅师，示人：‘高高山上立，深深海底行。’皆欲以这天上天下之神我，害尽天下苍生。一般瞎汉，死死执着这个，最难出也；打倒不惟无过也，且救他慧命，是释迦真儿孙。”

Translation: Ch'an school has a koan, monk asks Da Tong, "Throughout heaven and earth only I AM the world honoured one, what is this Self?" Da answers, "any faults for pushing down the teacher?" Jian says, "often there are Ch'an teachers, teaching people, 'We should stand atop the highest mountain, walk the floor of the deepest ocean'". With this God-Self of the Universe (Atman-Brahman), [one] causes harm to the common people. The commoners

stubbornly cling to this, and it is most difficult to come out of it, [thus] not only is there no faults in pushing down [such a teacher], one furthermore saves the person's wisdom-life, and is a true child of Shakya.

《云门史话》：世尊初生下，一手指天，一用指地，周行七步，目顾四方，云：“天上地下，唯我独尊。”师（云门）云：“我当时若见，一棒打杀与狗吃却，贵图天下太平。”

The《云门史话》states: "The world honoured one was born, one finger pointing to the sky, one finger pointing towards the earth, walks seven steps, surveys the four directions, and said, "I alone am the honored one throughout heaven and earth." The teacher （云门） says, "If I were there to witness that, I would strike him down in one blow and feed it to the dogs, for the sake of peace on earth."

“The trigger point here is the direct and thorough seeing that 'the mirror is nothing more than an arising thought'. With this, the solidity and all the grandeur of 'Brahman' goes down the drain. Yet it feels perfectly right and liberating without the agent and being simply as an arising thought or as a vivid moment of a bell resounding. All the vividness and presence remains, with an additional sense of freedom. Here a mirror/reflection union is clearly understood as flawed, there is only vivid reflection. There cannot be a 'union' if there isn't a subject to begin with. It is only in subtle recalling, that is in a thought recalling a previous moment of thought, that the watcher seems to exist. From here, I moved towards the 3rd degree of non-dual.” - John Tan, 2009, Stage 5 description

“「苦樂 升沉」包括痛麻癢...這些都是，這表示不是特別有一個三昧，各位修了就可以進入，未修就不能進入；或是說有所成就的人才有寶鏡三昧，不是！不管是佛還是凡 夫，有情、無情、饅頭、鑽石、唱歌、走路...皆是，到底什麼意思?

"The rise and fall of suffering and joy" including pain, numbness and itch... these are all it, this means it is not that there is a special samadhi, in which everybody can practice to enter, or that those who have not practiced are unable to enter it. Nor is it the case that only someone accomplished is able to obtain the jewel mirror samadhi, not so! It does not matter if one is a Buddha or a sentient being, sentient or insentient, steam bun, diamond, singing, walking... all is it, what does this mean?

以正眼看，全宇宙是一枚寶鏡三昧。因是一枚故，無能見與所見。

With accurate vision, the entire universe is a piece of Jewel Mirror Samadhi. Because it is one piece, there is no perceiver nor perceived.

『若解會為鏡』假如你把他解釋為一面鏡子，那就『入地獄如矢』。

If you interpret that as a mirror, then you'll enter straight into hell.

你把他當作一面鏡子 解釋，是解釋哦，一解釋的話，你就把他當作是對像去解說，那當然奇怪了，一面鏡子照的當然是影子，這樣分開來的話就完全錯了。

If you explain it as a mirror, you'll be treating it as an object, that would of course be odd. What a mirror reflects would of course be a reflection, it would be erroneous to delineate/separate in this way.

「入地獄如矢」就是馬上錯掉 了，不可以把他當作這樣去解釋。『不見言』是沒有聽說過嗎？『山河不在鏡中見，山河草木即鏡』，你聽到「全宇宙是一枚寶鏡三昧」，就把三昧當作是一副鏡 子，這樣就很容易錯掉了。所以他強調「山河草木不在鏡中見，山河草木就是鏡子」。千萬不要把你所看的、所覺受的當作是鏡中的影子，不可以這樣講，山河大地 本身都是鏡子，不是鏡中的影子。

"Entering straight into hell" means instantly falling into error, we cannot explain it that way. Haven't you heard of it? "Mountains and rivers are not seen within a mirror, mountains and rivers are themselves the mirror." When you heard "the whole universe is a piece of Jewel Mirror Samadhi", and you treat that as a mirror, it is very easy to err. Therefore he emphasizes, "mountains and rivers are not within a mirror, mountains, rivers, grasses and wood are the mirror." Never treat what you saw and sensed as being reflections of a mirror, we cannot explain it that way. Mountains, rivers, and the great earth are themselves the mirror, not the reflections of a mirror.

所以各位看到的、聽到的，你千萬不要以為是大圓鏡智所現，有一面法界法性的鏡子所現 的，隨你的因緣果報不同而現出的影子，這樣解說就完全錯掉了。看到、聽到、摸到、想到的通通都是鏡子，包括你自己，整個都是鏡子！這點不要誤會了。

Therefore, do not think that whatever you see and hear are the manifestations of the Great Mirror Wisdom, as if there is a universal mirror that is reflecting the reflections according to your causes and conditions/karma, such explanations are false. Whatever you see, hear, sense, think are entirely the mirror, including yourself - in their entirety they are all the mirror. Do not be mistaken on this point.” - Zen Master Hong Wen Liang (洪文亮老師)

“Every moment is an encounter of my thousand faces. The sound of thunder, every drop of rain, every heartbeat, every breath, every thought. Experience, experience, experience, experience!”

- Soh, 2012

“I came to realize clearly that the mind is not other than mountains, rivers, the great wide earth, sun, moon, stars”

- Dogen

“Mind as mountains, rivers, and the earth is nothing other than mountains, rivers, and the earth. There are no additional waves or surf, no wind or smoke. Mind as the sun, the moon, and the stars is nothing other than the sun, the moon, and the stars.”

- Dogen

“For Dōgen, Buddha-nature or Busshō (佛性) is the nature of reality and all Being. In the Shōbōgenzō, Dōgen writes that “whole-being (Existence itself) is the Buddha-nature” and that even inanimate things (grass, trees, etc.) are an expression of Buddha-nature. He rejected any view that saw Buddha-nature as a permanent, substantial inner self or

ground. Dōgen held that Buddha-nature was “vast emptiness”, “the world of becoming” and that “impermanence is in itself Buddha-nature”.[23] According to Dōgen:

Therefore, the very impermanency of grass and tree, thicket and forest is the Buddha nature. The very impermanency of men and things, body and mind, is the Buddha nature. Nature and lands, mountains and rivers, are impermanent because they are the Buddha nature. Supreme and complete enlightenment, because it is impermanent, is the Buddha nature.[24]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dōgen#Buddha-nature“

John Tan, 2007:

“Impermanence...

Thoughts, feelings and perceptions come and go; they are not ‘me’; they are transient in nature. Isn’t it clear that if I am aware of these passing thoughts, feelings and perceptions, then it proves some entity is immutable and unchanging? This is a logical conclusion rather than experiential truth. The formless reality seems real and unchanging because of propensities (conditioning) and the power to recall a previous experience and the experience of ‘impersonality’ may not be able to bring sufficient clarity to the ‘impermanent and dynamic’ aspect of isness presence. The bliss and peace experienced here, is still the bliss of formlessness.

There is also another experience, this experience does not discard or disown the transients -- forms, thoughts, feelings and perceptions. It is the experience that thought thinks and sound hears. Thought knows not because there is a separate knower but because it is that which is known. It knows because it's it. It gives rise to the insight that isness never exists in an undifferentiated state but as transient manifestation; each moment of manifestation is an entirely new reality, complete in its own. This brings about the insight of non-duality but the experience of ‘impersonality need not necessarily arise.

My experience is fusing and stabilizing these 2 experiences are necessary to help further dissolve the ‘I’. With the dropping of the 'I' , experience whole-heartedly and dropped the experience immediately; then nothing will imobilize the flow.

PS: By the way, any idea what give rise to the sense of impersonality?”

“Katagiri-Roshi said,

The important point is not to try to escape your life. But to face it- exactly and completely the way it is beyond discussion of good and bad, right and wrong, like and dislike. All you have to do is just take one step. Strickly speaking, there is just one thing we have to face and nothing else (the temporal condition). If you believe there is something else besides this one thing, this is not pure practice. Just take one step in this moment with wholeheartedness.

In studying the fasicle Bussho, we find that Buddha-nature is not a thing that represents some kind of foundation. Buddha-nature is impermanence and interconnectedness. It is essentially empty. Dogen breaks down the “thingness” or solidness of all things by deconstructing time, space and body. He only writes of the whole body or entire being, and the total functioning or interconnectedness of life. The temporal conditions are the coming together of all the

factors which produce the formation of this very moment. That formation itself is Buddha-nature. - Zen teacher Judith Ragir, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/06/the-emancipation-of-suchness.html”

Geovani Geo's insight shared in Awakening to Reality group:

"From another thread:
Someone wrote: "If you see awareness as the untouchable ground of being then things can come and go within it but not have their own existence apart from awareness - but awareness can exist without them.
If on the other hand you see appearances as being modulations of awareness then there is a sense in which you could say that awareness is always 'modulating' in one way or another. So in this way of looking there is always awareness and it always has some kind of appearance - because appearance is an essential aspect of being and to suggest that either being or appearance could exist separately would be incoherent."
I think a got the whole thing now!! You see, above, you are still projecting "things" AND an "awareness". Even when you posit an awareness that modulates itself, there is still a notion that somehow there is an Awareness that is subtly different from things. Look at it. Why the need to talk about an Awareness that is OTHER than things, and that modulates itself? Only Awareness is!! The flow of ever changing things is what Awareness is!!!
Many here have had this realization, but every now and then, because of the wrong view, such realization slips away and a background is questioned. There is no background AND a foreground. If you use the word god, then there is only god. NOT god AND his creation. The whole thing downed to me this morning. See?"
"When Soh says that he is not denying awareness, sounded strange to me. But considering the OP line of inquiry, it seems obvious that the "awareness" that soh is not denying is not some OTHER awareness separate from things. But maybe he could have been clearer by explaining that the non-negated awareness he is referring to, is just another name for the flux of phenomena, or perhaps what "buddha mind" means. Certainly it is not some ongoing self-abiding ground awareness."

“Geovani Geo wrote:

We hear a sound. The immediate deeply inbuilt conditioning says, "hearing ". But there is a fallacy there. There is only sound. Ultimately, no hearer and no hearing. The same with all other senses. A centralized, or expanded, or zero-dimensional inherent perceiver or aware-er is an illusion.

Thusness/John Tan:

Very good.

Means both stanza is clear.
In hearing, no hearer.
In hearing, only sound. No hearing.”

“The Stanza One complements and refines Stanza Two to make the experience of no-self thorough and effortless into just only chirping birds, drum beats, footsteps, sky, mountain, walking, chewing and tasting; no witness whatsoever hiding anywhere! 'Everything' is a process, event, manifestation and phenomenon, nothing ontological or having an essence.”

- John Tan, 2009

“By then it is clear that the transient phenomena is already happening in the perfect way; unwinding what must be unwinded, manifesting what must be manifested and subsides when it is time to go. There is no problem with this transient happening, the only problem is having an ‘extra mirror’, a reification due to the power of the mind to abstract. The mirror is not perfect; it is the happening that is perfect. The mirror appears to be perfect only to a dualistic and inherent view.” - John Tan, 2009

“For those masters that taught,
“Let thoughts arise and subside,
See the background mirror as perfect and be unaffected.”
With all due respect, they have just “blah” something nice but deluded.

Rather,

See that there is no one behind thoughts.
First, one thought then another thought.
With deepening insight it will later be revealed,
Always just this, One Thought!
Non-arising, luminous yet empty!” - John Tan, 2009

“It is not only about recognizing the reflections as reflections, but also recognizing that there is no mirror (no mind)!” - Yogi Prabodha Jnana, teacher from the Dzogchen lineage. Also, for Dzogchen teachings, I like Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith’s teachings as it is very much in line with anatta and emptiness: Acarya Malcolm on Dzogchen and Advaita Vedanta

Many of the old Dzogchen masters like Mipam (read the book ‘Jamgon Mipam’ and ‘Mipham’s Beacon of Clarity’), Longchenpa (see: The Philosophical Foundations of Classical rDzogs chen in Tibet: Investigating the Distinction Between Dualistic Mind (sems) and Primordial knowing (ye shes)) and Padmasambhava (see: Self-Liberation through Seeing with Naked Awareness in English & Chinese) also clearly elucidated the anatta insight.

Some quotes from the link above ‘The Philosopical Foundations of...’: “To longchenpa self-awareness "is simply a vivid auto-manifestation, a process lacking any reality whatsoever".

...

According to the viewpoint of this system, he says, all phenomena are self-luminous in the state of great primordial knowing like light in the sky, having always been the very essence of this self-occuring primorial knowing which remains naturally free from causes and conditions .263

...

[Longchenpa:]: "It is eminently reasonable to claim that any objects that appear are unreal, but we refute the claim that mind is ultimately real.
....

"It is possible, Klong chen pa suggests, to simply recognize this nondual self-occuring primordial knowing in its pristine nakedness (rjen pa sang nge ba) - both as it abides in its naked clarity and as it continuously manifests as myriad objects - without hypostatizing it.273 For so long as "one thinks of the abiding and manifesting of cognition as two different things and talks about [the experience of] 'settling in the nonconceptual essence' [but also of] 'preserving the expressive energy as being free in its arising' , one's practice goes in two directions and one fails to understand the key point."

“Kyle Dixon:

Is primordial knowing a gloss of ye shes?
I assume so
Dzogchen will even go as far as to say Buddhas do not even have ye shes
Some Mahāyāna texts say this too
Because if they really had jñāna it could be misconstrued as a subjective reference point

Longchenpa: From the [ultimate] perspective the meditative equipoise of the realised (sa thob) and awakened beings (sangs rgyas), there exists neither object of knowledge (shes bya) nor knowing cognitive process (shes byed) and so forth, for there is neither object to apprehend nor the subject that does the apprehending. Even the exalted cognitive process (yeshes) as a subject ceases (zhi ba) to operate.”

Phase 5 onwards are the crucial elements of the Buddhist form of enlightenment. It should be noted that it is possible to have peak experiences of no-mind (sense of a self temporarily dissolve, leaving merely the vivid colors/forms/sounds/sensations) but not having the direct realization of anatta as a dharma seal (characteristic of mind/phenomena/experience) as being always already so. This is similar to having a glimpse of recognition or experience of I AM and yet lacking direct realization of I AM as stated in Stage 1. A similar thing can happen for Stage 5, or Stage 6 - having glimpses of experiences similar to Stage 5 and 6, but lacking the direct realization that is the defining criteria for having realized the insights of these phases.

“No mind is an experience, it is not an insight. People that have experienced no-mind knows there is such experience and aims towards achieving it again, but insight is different... it is a direct experiential realization that all along it is so.” - John Tan, 2010

“John: for you, you will not be clear now... what Richard taught has some problem...that focus is in the experience. you should focus on the realization
The PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) is what I told you, bring what you experience into the foreground. Richard has a very important realization. that is, he is able to realize the immediate radiance in the transience

Soh: this is like your second point of anatta in the anatta article?

John: yes. there is nothing to argue, it is obvious and clear. however I do not want to focus on the experience” - Conversation with John Tan, 2010, Actual Freedom and the Immediate Radiance in the Transience

August 2010:

“(11:07 PM) Thusness: for example you see AF description of insight and experience are very similar to what i described in anatta article.

(11:11 PM) Thusness: there is no ending to this realization
(11:42 PM) Thusness: Allow the muddy waters of mental activity to clear;
Refrain from both positive and negative projection -
leave appearances alone:
The phenomenal world, without addition or subtraction, is Mahamudra/liberation.

-Tilopa
this is very good
(11:46 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:51 PM) Thusness: ask how will what he realize thus far can lead to the insight that The phenomenal world, without addition or subtraction, is Mahamudra/liberation.

ask luckystrikes
(11:52 PM) AEN: ok posted
(12:29 AM) AEN: “If you see that awareness is none other than everything, and that none of those things are separate "things" at all, why even use the word awareness anymore? All you are left with is the world, your life, the diversity of experience itself.”
(12:30 AM) Thusness: very good.
(12:31 AM) Thusness: This is anatta

(12:31 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:32 AM) Thusness: what’s left in is the intensity of practice.
(12:33 AM) Thusness: until there is completely without trace of awareness”

[3:44 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Anurag Jain
Soh Wei Yu
the Witness collapses after the gestalt of arisings are seen through in Direct Path. Objects, as you have already mentioned, should have been thoroughly deconstructed before. With objects and arisings deconstructed there is nothing to be a Witness of and it collapses.
1
· Reply
· 1m
[3:46 PM, 1/1/2021] John Tan: Not true. Object and arising can also collapse through subsuming into an all encompassing awareness.
[3:48 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: yeah but its like nondual
[3:49 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: means after the collapse of the Witness and arising, it can be nondual
[3:49 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: but still one mind
[3:49 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: right?
[3:49 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: but then atmananda also said at the end even the notion of consciousness dissolves
[3:49 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: i think thats like one mind into no mind but im not sure whether it talks about anatta
[3:50 PM, 1/1/2021] John Tan: Yes.
[3:57 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Anurag Jain
Soh Wei Yu
where is the notion of "all encompassing awareness". Sounds like awareness is being reified as a container.

· Reply
· 5m

Anurag Jain
Soh Wei Yu
also when you say Consciousness dissolves, you have to first answer how did it ever exist in the first place? 😳
· Reply
· 4m
[3:57 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: lol
[4:01 PM, 1/1/2021] John Tan: In subsuming there is no container-contained relationship, there is only Awareness.
[4:03 PM, 1/1/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Anurag Jain
So Soh Wei Yu
how does Awareness "remain"? Where and how?

· Reply
· 1m
[4:04 PM, 1/1/2021] John Tan: Anyway this is not for unnecessary debates, if he truly understands then just let it be.

.....

"Yes. Subject and object can both collapsed into pure seeing but it is only when this pure seeing is also dropped/exhausted that natural spontaneity and effortlessness can begin to function marvelously. That is why it has to be thorough and all the "emphasis". But I think he gets it, so you don't have to keep nagging 🤦." - John Tan

“The arising and ceasing is called the Transience,
Is self luminous and self perfected from beginning.
However due to the karmic propensity that divides,
The mind separates the ‘brilliance’ from the ever arising and ceasing.
This karmic illusion constructs ‘the brilliance’,
Into an object that is permanent and unchanging.
The ‘unchanging’ which appears unimaginably real,
Only exists in subtle thinking and recalling.
In essence the luminosity is itself empty,
Is already unborn, unconditioned and ever pervading.
Therefore fear not the arising and ceasing.

There is no this that is more this than that.
Although thought arises and ceases vividly,
Every arising and ceasing remains as entire as it can be.

The emptiness nature that is ever manifesting presently
Has not in anyway denied its own luminosity.

Although non-dual is seen with clarity,
The urge to remain can still blind subtly.
Like a passerby that passes, is gone completely.
Die utterly
And bear witness of this pure presence, its non-locality.

~ John Tan

And hence... "Awareness" is not anymore "special" or "ultimate" than the transient mind.”- 2008

“First I do not see Anatta as merely a freeing from personality sort of experience as you mentioned; I see it as that a self/agent, a doer, a thinker, a watcher, etc, cannot be found apart from the moment to moment flow of manifestation or as its commonly expressed as ‘the observer is the observed’; there is no self apart from arising and passing. A very important point here is that Anatta/No-Self is a Dharma Seal, it is the nature of Reality all the time -- and not merely as a state free from personality, ego or the ‘small self’ or a stage to attain. This means that it does not depend on the level of achievement of a practitioner to experience anatta but Reality has always been Anatta and what is important here is the intuitive insight into it as the nature, characteristic, of phenomenon (dharma seal).

To put further emphasis on the importance of this point, I would like to borrow from the Bahiya Sutta that ‘in the seeing, there is just the seen, no seer’, ‘in the hearing, there is just the heard, no hearer’ as an illustration. When a person says that I have gone beyond the experiences from ‘I hear sound’ to a stage of ‘becoming sound’, he is mistaken. When it is taken to be a stage, it is illusory. For in actual case, there is and always is only sound when hearing; never was there a hearer to begin with. Nothing attained for it is always so. This is the seal of no-self. Therefore to a non dualist, the practice is in understanding the illusionary views of the sense of self and the split. Before the awakening of prajna wisdom, there will always be an unknowing attempt to maintain a purest state of 'presence'. This purest presence is the 'how' of a dualistic mind -- its dualistic attempt to provide a solution due to its lack of clarity of the spontaneous nature of the unconditioned. It is critical to note here that both the doubts/confusions/searches and the solutions that are created for these doubts/confusions/searches actually derive from the same cause -- our karmic propensities of ever seeing things dualistically.” - Soh

“Direct Seal of Great Bliss
Thusness wrote in the comments section of the LuminousEmptiness blog in 2009:

http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/2008/07/where-did-my-breath-go.html
What expressed is truly wonderful!
It is so much to my liking that I have to say something.

Always only an assumption collating together and called 'something'.
Be it breath, anger, fear or anything manifesting;
Always only sensations or heart beats or coldness or an arising thought of something.
Exactly like what Buddha taught in anatta,
Merely aggregates and 18 dhatus playing;
With no agent anywhere found hiding.

When experience matures in the practice of great ease,
The experience is maha! Great, miraculous and bliss.
In mumdane activities of seeing, eating and tasting,

When expressed poetically is as if the entire universe meditating.

Whatever said and expressed are really all different flavours,
Of this everything of everything dependently originating,
As this moment of vivid shimmering.

May Buddha bless you full enlightenment,
good luck and forgive my busy-bodying!

Gone!

http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/2008/12/reflections-on-naropa-summary-of.html

Great and wonderful insight!
Just a 2 cents from a PasserBy, nothing intense.

It is pointless to know the nature of mind is luminous and empty,
If there is no insight that this innate nature is the direct seal of Great Bliss.

After insight of anatta, emptiness and non-dual luminosity,
It is advisable not to retract to practices that made mind contrive.

Never underestimate this direct path of great ease,
Even aeons lives of practices cannot touch the depth of its profundity.

Deeply experience this luminous yet empty nature, its thorough effortlessness and spontaneity.
It is the heart of Mahamudra, the great art that simply be.

Deep bow and reverent to Naropa for this view concisely put and,
Homage to the ground, this natural state of Great Bliss.

Happy Journey!

(Soh: Also see The Incredible Bliss of Anatta)

...

"I don't personally find it pointless - rather, a step along the way ;-)..."

Indeed and thanks for pointing out. :)

The degree of “un-contrivance” is the degree of how unreserved and fearless we open to whatever is.
For whatever arises is mind, always seen, heard, tasted and experienced.
What that is not seen, not heard and not experienced is our conceptual idea of mind.
Whenever we objectify the “brilliance, the pristine-ness” into an entity that is formless,
It becomes an object of grasp that prevents the seeing of the “forms”, the texture and the fabric of awareness.
The tendency to objectify is subtle, even ‘nowness’ and ‘hereness’ are as ‘selfness’. :)
Whatever arises merely dependently originates, needless of who, where and when.

All experiences are equal, luminous yet empty of self-nature.
Though empty it has not in anyway denied its vivid luminosity.

Liberation is experiencing mind as it is.
Self-Liberation is the thorough insight that this liberation is always and already is;
Spontaneously present, naturally perfected!

Just a sharing.

Happy new year to you!

....

http://luminousemptiness.blogspot.com/2009/03/all-experience-is-mind.html

Yes indeed. From the perspective of awareness, there is no way to point to a moment of experience and say this is ‘in’ and this is ‘out’. All ‘in’ are as ‘out’; to awareness seamless experience is all there is.

Yet in addition to this ‘ungraspability and unlocatabilty’ nature, emptiness is also about this maha sensation when a moment of luminous experience comes into being due to the inter-being and interdependency of everything as if the universe is doing the work and nothing ‘me’. When there is no sense of self, ‘Tong!’, the sound, the person, the stick, the bell, hitting, vibration of the air, ears...all come together as the moment of experience called 'sound'. The universe is giving its very best for this moment of experience to arise.

Also when experience is seen as the manifestation of dependent origination, there is a sensation of always right wherever and whenever is. A sensation of home everywhere yet no place can be called home.

Just a sharing.”

At Phase 5, one finally overcomes the view of eternalism (where one posits/views/perceives/experiences Consciousness/Awareness/Mind to be unchanging/eternal in contrast to other changing phenomena) that prevails the first four

https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=39&t=25540...
Astus:
"To say that the mind is rattled and the nature is composed is the view of other ways; to say that the nature is clear and deep and the form shifts and moves is the view of other ways. The study of the mind and study of the nature on the way of the buddha are not like this. The practice of the mind and practice of the nature on the way of the buddha are not equivalent to the other ways. The clarification of the mind and the clarification of the nature on the way of the buddha, the other ways have no share in."
(Dogen: Talking of the Mind, Talking of the Nature)

Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith:
Excellent case in point.

....

Zen Master Dogen wrote well about this:

https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo/bendo.pdf

He may then respond, “There are some who say: Do not grieve over birth and death, since there is an extremely quick method for freeing yourself from them, namely, by understanding the principle that it is the innate nature of one’s mind to be ever-abiding, to persist without change. This means that, because this physical body has been born, it will inevitably come to perish, but even so, this innate nature of the mind will never perish. When someone fully comprehends that the innate nature of his mind—which is never swept away by birth and death—is in his body, he sees it to be his true and genuine nature. Thus, his body is but a temporary form, being born here and dying there, ever subject to change, whilst his mind is ever-abiding, so there is no reason to expect it to vary over past, present, and future. To understand the matter in this way is what is meant by being free from birth and death. For the one who understands this principle, his future births and deaths will come to an end, so that when his body expires, he will enter the ocean of real existence. When he flows into this ocean of being, he will undoubtedly possess wonderful virtues, just as all the Buddhas and Tathagatas have done. Even though he may realize this in his present life, he will not be exactly the same as those Holy Ones, since he has a bodily existence which was brought about through deluded actions in past lives. The person who does not yet understand this principle will be ever spun about through successive births and deaths. Therefore, we should just make haste and fully comprehend the principle of the innate nature of the mind being ever-abiding and persisting without change. To pass one’s life just sitting around idly, what can be gained by that? Such a statement as this truly corresponds to the Way of all the Buddhas and all the Ancestors, don’t you think?”

I would point out, “The view that you have just expressed is in no way Buddhism, but rather the non-Buddhist view of the Shrenikans.10 This erroneous view of theirs may be stated as follows:

In our bodies there is a soul-like intelligence. When this intelligence, or intellect, encounters conditions, it makes distinctions between good and bad as well as discriminating right from wrong. It is conscious of what is painful or itches from desire, and is awake to what is hard to bear or easy. All such responses are within the capacity of this intelligence. However, when this body of ours perishes, this soul-like nature sloughs it off and is reborn somewhere else. As a result, even though it appears to perish in the here and now, it will have its rebirth in another place, never perishing, but always abiding unchanged.

“So this erroneous view goes. Be that as it may, your modeling yourself upon this view and regarding it as the Buddha’s Teaching is more foolish than clutching onto a roof tile or a pebble in the belief that it is gold or some precious jewel. The shamefulness of such befuddled ignorance and delusion beggars comparison. National Teacher Echū in Great Sung China has strongly warned us about such a view. For you to now equate the wondrous Dharma of all the Buddhas with the mistaken notion that your mind will abide whilst your physical features perish, and to imagine that the very thing which gives rise to the cause of birth and death has freed you from birth and death—is this not being foolish? And how deeply pitiable! Be aware that this is the mistaken view of one who is outside the Way, and do not lend an ear to it.

(10.The Shrenikans were a group of non-Buddhists who are thought to have followed the teachings of Shrenika, a contemporary of Shakyamuni Buddha. On occasion, they used terms similar to those in Buddhism, but with different meanings.)

“Because I now feel even greater pity for you, I cannot leave the matter here, but will try to rescue you from your erroneous view. You should understand that, in Buddhism, we have always spoken not only of body and mind as being inseparable, but also of the nature of something and the form it takes as not being two different things.

As this Teaching was likewise well known in both India and China, we dare not deviate from It. Even more, in Buddhist instruction that speaks of what is persistent, all things are said to have persistence without their ever being separated into categories of ‘body’ and ‘mind’.11

In instruction that talks about cessation, all things are said to be subject to cessation without differentiating whether they are of some particular nature or have some particular form. So why do you risk contradicting the correct principle by saying that the body ceases whilst the mind permanently abides?

Not only that, you must fully understand that ‘birth and death’ is nirvana: there has never been any talk of a nirvana outside of birth and death. Moreover, even though you may erroneously reckon that there is a Buddha Wisdom that is separate from birth and death because you have worked it out that the mind permanently abides apart from the body, this ‘mind’ of yours—which understands, and works matters out, and perceives things, and knows what they are—is still something that arises and disappears, and is in no way ‘ever-abiding’.

Surely, this ‘mind’ of yours is something completely transitory! “You will see, if you give it a taste, that the principle of the oneness of body and mind is something constantly being talked about in Buddhism. So, how does the mind, on its own, apart from the body, keep from arising and disappearing as this body of yours arises and perishes?

Furthermore, were they inseparable at one time and not inseparable at another, then what the Buddha said would, naturally, be false and deceiving. “In addition, should you suddenly get the notion that eradicating birth and death is what the Dharma is really about, it would lead you to sullying the Precept against despising the Buddha Dharma. Do watch out for this! “

You must also understand that what is spoken of in the Buddha’s Teachings as ‘the Gate to the Teaching on the vast characteristics common to the nature of all minds’ takes in the whole universe, without dividing it into innate natures and their forms or ever referring to things as ‘coming into existence’ or ‘perishing’.

Nothing, up to and including realizing enlightenment and nirvana, is excluded from the innate nature of your mind. Each and every thing throughout the whole of the universe is simply ‘the One Mind’ from which nothing whatsoever is excluded. All Gates to the Teaching are equally of this One Mind. To assert that there are no differences whatsoever is the way the Buddhist family understands the nature of Mind. So, within this one all-inclusive Dharma, how can you separate body from mind or split ‘birth and death’ off from ‘nirvana’? You are already a disciple of the Buddha, so do not give ear to the clatter of a lunatic’s tongue as he utters views that are off the True Track.”

(11. Dōgen makes a distinction between the Buddhist concept of persistence and the Shrenikan concept of abiding. With the former, all phenomena, physical and non-physical, arise and continue on (‘persist’) for an unspecified period before disintegrating and disappearing, whereas with the latter, the mind is thought to remain (‘abide’) unchanged and unchanging forever.)

“Buddha-nature

For Dōgen, Buddha-nature or *Busshō* (佛性) is the nature of reality and all Being. In the *Shōbōgenzō*, Dōgen writes that "whole-being is the Buddha-nature" and that even inanimate objects (rocks, sand, water) are an expression of Buddha-nature. He rejected any view that saw Buddha-nature as a permanent, substantial inner self or ground. Dōgen held that Buddha-nature was "vast emptiness", "the world of becoming" and that "impermanence is in itself Buddha-nature".[39] According to Dōgen:

Therefore, the very impermanency of grass and tree, thicket and forest is the Buddha nature. The very impermanency of men and things, body and mind, is the Buddha nature. Nature and lands, mountains and rivers, are impermanent because they are the Buddha nature. Supreme and complete enlightenment, because it is impermanent, is the Buddha nature.[40]”
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%C5%8Dgen

From the Zen blue cliff records, on whether buddha nature is destroyed with the end of the world:

Daizui's Kalpa Fire (30 of 100)
Main Case

Attention! A monk asked Daizui, "In the ranging kalpa fire, chiliocosms are together destroyed. I wonder if this is destroyed or not destroyed?" Daizui said, "Destroyed." The monk asked, "If so, does everything go with it?" Daizui said, "Everything goes with it."

The same monk later asked Ryusai, "In the raging on the kalpa fire, chiliocosms are together destroyed. I wonder if this is destroyed or not destroyed?" Ryusai replied, "Not destroyed." The monk asked, "Why is it not destroyed?" Ryusai replied, "Because it is the same as the chiliocosms."

Book of Serenity version

Www.reddit.com/r/Koans/comments/1py265/dasuis_aeonic_fire_30_of_100/

“Dogen’s Extensive Record:

Engo Zenji said, ‘Coming and going within life and death is the true human body.’

Nansen said, ‘Coming and going within life and death is the true body.’

Joshu said, ‘Life and death is precisely the true person.’
Chosha said, ‘Coming and going within life and death is exactly the true body of all buddhas.’

The teacher (Dogen) said: These four worthies each set forth the spirit of their sects. What they say is well said, but it is not yet there. If it were I who said it, I would not say it thus, but rather: life and death is just life and death.” – Zen: The Authentic Gate

Sitting Zen
Someone wrote：

“坐禅非是道
坐禅非非道
道就是什么
喝
喝也非是道”

(Soh's translation:
Sitting Zen is not Dao [the Way]
Sitting Zen is not other than Dao [the Way]
What is Dao [the Way]?
KATZ!

Katz is also not Dao [the Way])

Zen Master reply：

“坐禅即是道
坐禅不是道
如何是是道
喝
喝即喝喝道”

(Soh's translation:
Sitting Zen is the Dao [the Way]
Sitting Zen is not the Dao [the Way]
What is Is Dao [the Way]?
KATZ!
Katz is Katz Katz Dao [the Way])

John Tan reply in 2018：

“Sometimes I wonder why a master write in such a way....lol

那么多不必要的是是非非
那么多不必要的道三道四
还不如
行只是行，卧只是卧
见只是见，闻只是闻
若能如此，莫问道

(Soh's translation:
So much unnecessary Is and Is Not
So much unnecessary Dao this, Dao that
[All these are] still not as good as
[In] action only action, [in] sleeping is only sleep
[In] the seen only the seen, [in] the heard is only the heard
If it is possible to be like this, there is none who ask about Dao)”

"It is often misinterpreted that Buddha-nature is some sort of immutable soul or inherently existing essence that is contrasted with the impermanent and mutable aggregates of the mind and body. Dogen however insists that impermanence is the Buddha nature. He quotes the following words of Hui-neng:

The sixth Patriarch taught his disciple Hsing-ch'ang (Gyosho) that impermanence in itself is the Buddha nature, that permanence is good and evil, each and every phenomenal thing, and discriminating mind." - Soh

Dogen: "Therefore, the very impermanency of grass and tree, thicket and forest is the Buddha nature. The very impermanency of men and things, body and mind, is the Buddha nature. Nature and lands, mountains and rivers, are impermanent because they are the Buddha nature. Supreme and complete enlightenment, because it is impermanent, is the Buddha nature. Great Nirvana, because it is impermanent, is the Buddha nature."

Zen Master Dogen, like Soh, do not hesitate to criticise even well-known teachers for falling into extremes such as eternalism and other kinds of false views.

“Meditation Master Engo Kokugon once said in a poem commenting on an ancient Ancestor’s kōan story: When fish swim, they may muddy up the water; When birds fly, they may shed a feather. It is hard indeed to escape the ever-bright Mirror.5The Great Void knows no bounds. Once something has passed, it is far, far gone. The five hundred rebirths were simply dependent on the fox’s Great Practice with cause and effect. A thunderbolt may suddenly smash a mountain and the wind churn up the sea, But the Pure Gold, though refined a hundred times, never changes Its color.* ***Even this verse leans towards denying cause and effect and, at the same time, tends to support the view of eternalism.****"*

*"The monk known as Meditation Master Daie Sōkō once said the following in a congratulatory poem: ‘Not being subject to’ and ‘not being blind to’ Are merely stones and clods of earth. Having met them along the path between the rice fields, I pulverized the silver mountain. Clapping my hands, I give a hearty “Ho, ho!” wherever I am, For here in Kōshū, this foolish Laughing Buddha is to be found.7****Present-day people in Sung dynasty China consider monks like Daie to be Masters skillful in leading trainees, but Daie’s opinions and understanding never reached the level of skillful means in instructing others in the Buddha Dharma. If anything, he leaned towards naturalism.****8"*

- Zen Master Dogen, https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo/088jinshiInga.pdf

You can read more about Dogen criticisizing false views of various teachers/teachings here: My opinion on Shurangama Sutra

"Dogen is really a difficult person with whom to practice. In a sense, he’s so stubborn and picky. Many Zen texts agree with this theory in these sutras and Zongmi’s. Dogen is a very unusual and unique Zen master. To be his student is a difficult thing." - Shohaku Okumura

“And it is not just I that would openly criticise the views of these teachers and practitioners. Zen Master Dogen was very

open about criticizing his contemporary Zen masters that fall into such views. It was very common for Zen masters to get stuck at I AM and One Mind back then, as it is today. Zen Master Dogen was a rare beacon of clarity, although of course there are some other Zen masters that were also clear. Zen Master Dogen would not mince a word at critiquing his contemporaries or those who hold erroneous views, and would even use words that I would not use, like 'madmen' to describe holders of such view.

To point out how rare anatta and emptiness realisation is, I would also like to quote a passage from 'Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with Commentary by Jamgon Mipham',

"There is a story that once when Atisha was in Tibet, he received news of the death of the master Maitripa. He was deeply grieved, and on being questioned about the reasons for his sorrow, he replied that Buddhism was in decline in India and that everywhere there was syncretism and confusion. Until then, Atisha continued, there had been only two masters in the whole of India, Maitripa and himself, capable of discerning the correct teaching from the doctrines and practices of the reviving Hindu schools. The time is sure to come, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche commented, and perhaps it is already here, when there will be an analogous situation in the West. Only the correct establishment of the view will enable one to find one's way through the religious confusion of the modern West and to distinguish authentic Buddhism from the New Age "self-help" versions that are already taking hold.”

Just like it is rare today to find someone who is able to penetrate wrong views and distinguish between the views of I AM/One Mind and anatta & emptiness, it was rare even in ancient times.

Personally, I just find myself so fortunate to have come to know John Tan, otherwise I will 100% be stuck at I AM like so many other practitioners and teachers. It is rare now, just like it was rare back in the days to have someone with such clarity, to be able to distinguish clearly and have such deep comprehension.” - Soh, About whether XYZ teacher realised anatta, etc

Do read: **Teachers who Realised Anatta** https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/02/teachers-who-realised-anatta.html

If you find it is strange that there were only two masters in the whole of India that had realized anatta back then in the 11th century, a similar analogous situation is present today – I can only find two dharma teachers in the whole of India (a sub-continent with over 1 billion+ population) that is currently teaching from the experiential insight of anatman – the Dzogchen practitioners/teachers Prabodha Jnana Yogi* and Abhaya Devi Yogini. You’ll probably say, well, that’s to be expected because Buddhism largely died out in India, Hinduism being its current predominant religion, so of course the Atman view must be prevalent. However, I would also add that throughout China and Taiwan (where roughly 20% and 35% respectively are Buddhists), another subcontinent with currently over 1+ billion people, I can only find two dharma teachers that teaches with the experiential insight into anatman – Zen Master Hong Wen Liang （洪文亮禅师）and Zen Master Hui Lu （慧律法师）(update: September 2020, found the third one: 继程法师. Upate 2021: sorry, 继程法师 doesn’t live in China but in Malaysia.). The others, as I found, mostly teach from the

realization of I AM and one mind. I believe this is largely due to the gradual evolution of doctrinal influences over hundreds/thousands of years that made the Chinese Mahayana teaching gradually deviate from the original doctrine of No-Mind/Anatman taught by the first Ch’an Patriarch Bodhidharma, as I discussed in Problem with Many Zen Teachings, and perhaps elucidated more clearly in scholastic books like How Buddhism Acquired a Soul on the Way to China (which I never read, but the synposis seems interesting). Interestingly, insight into anatman is somewhat more common in the west at the moment. Realization of anatman is seemingly more common in Soto Zen (a Japanese Zen sect that was derived from the Chinese Cao Dong school of Ch’an Buddhism) perhaps due to the emphasis on the study of its founder Zen Master Dogen’s teachings, but I have known people who realize anatman in all the three main Buddhist traditions – Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana, and within Vajrayana I know of and can name people [currently alive] who realized anatta in basically all the subsects of Vajrayana, so I know that this insight is fundamental to all Buddhist traditions without exception, although not always commonly attained.

Arcaya Malcolm said in 2020, “While there are problems with Sino-Japanese concepts of self, as eloquently illustrated by the late Jungnok Park in his *How Buddhism Acquired a Soul on the Way to China*, the idea of all phenomena possessing buddhanature that we see frequently mentioned in Sino-Japanese Buddhism is not a problematic at all, if understood as Nāgārjuna states it in the MMK, "Whatever is the nature of the Tathāgata, that is the nature of the world. As the Tathāgata has no nature, the world has no nature."”

* [8:44 AM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Yogi Prabodha Jnana is very good and clear
[11:58 AM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. you just read something in it?
[12:20 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: I think he visited atr also
[12:20 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Lol
[12:43 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah from the start he already told me.. years ago
[12:43 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: He said the things i post are interesting, am i a teacher?
[12:43 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I said no im not a dharma teacher lol
[12:43 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Then he liked the post i posted by Yasutani Roshi on no mirror

[12:52 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: you communicated with Yogi Prabodha Jnana years ago?
[12:54 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: He said your stages are in line with the essence of buddhism
[12:54 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Haha
[1:01 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Yes I find his teachings very interesting also.
[1:02 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: His emphasis on anatta and no mirror especially.
[1:05 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. yeah
[1:11 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: his partner Abhaya Devi Yogini is also clear about it

The doctrine of the inseparability of samsara and nirvana is only explicitly taught in both Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism only, not explicitly so in Theravada. It should however be noted that in Theravada, Nibbana/Nirvana can be achieved in this very life-time while one is still alive and breathing - it is the cessation of passion, aggression and delusion, and all manners of clinging and the proliferation of ‘I am’. Furthermore, the early scriptures of the Pāli Canon rejects all

types of eternalist doctrines, as the Buddha was very adamant in rejecting all types of views that are eternalist or nihilist. For example, in the Brahmajala suttas (among many other suttas) the Buddha spelt out and rejected the eternalist view that posits mind or consciousness to be changeless:

“49. "In the fourth case, owing to what, with reference to what, are some honorable recluses and brahmins eternalists in regard to some things and non-eternalists in regard to other things, proclaiming the self and the world to be partly eternal and partly non-eternal?

"Herein, bhikkhus, recluse or a certain brahmin is a rationalist, an investigator. He declares his view — hammered out by reason, deduced from his investigations, following his own flight of thought — thus: 'That which is called "the eye," "the ear," "the nose," "the tongue," and "the body" — that self is impermanent, unstable, non-eternal, subject to change. But that which is called "mind" (citta) or "mentality" (mano) or "consciousness" (viññāṇa) — that self is permanent, stable, eternal, not subject to change, and it will remain the same just like eternity itself.'

"This, bhikkhus, is the fourth case. - https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/dn/dn.01.0.bodh.html

Also, dependent origination is taught as the middle way free from extremes of eternalism and nihilism in the the early scriptures of the Pāli Canon. The Buddha explained (SN 12:17):

“[If one thinks,] “The one who acts is the same as the one who experiences [the result],” [then one asserts] with reference to one existing from the beginning, “Dukkha is created by oneself.” When one asserts thus, this amounts to eternalism.

But Kassapa, [if one thinks,] “The one who acts is one, the one who experiences [the result] is another,” [then one asserts] with reference to one stricken by feeling: “Dukkha is created by another.” When one asserts thus, this amounts to annihilation.

Without veering toward either of these extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma by the middle: “With ignorance as condition, formative actions [arise]: [the remainder of the twelve links are listed, with each conditioning the arising of the next.]...Such is the origin of this whole mass of dukkha. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of formative actions...[the rest of the links]. Such as the cessation of the whole mass of dukkha.”

It is also important to understand that the realisation of anatta is not just understanding everything to be impermanent and momentary, and hence, not self. Many people understand anatta/no-self that way. However, as John Tan said before, that is merely an inferential understanding and not a direct realization. Most Buddhists only understand anatta (if they have any understanding at all) inferentially, through logical deductions like that, or even a partially deduced understanding based on some glimpses of the momentary nature of all experiences in meditation which led to a mental conclusion that what is impermanent does not belong to a self, but all these partially or fully inferentially-deduced understandings are far from the yogic and direct realization, taste and actualization of anatta as in the case of John Tan Stage 5.

"Understand no background first, no container - all those that I told you. What is the true meaning of no-self. There are those that talk a lot about no-self, but there is no correct understanding. [One attempts to understand anatta inferentially and] just say change, no permanent self, and so on and so forth, but there is no true understanding. Like when you begin, what is no-self to you? It is always no inherent existence, impermanence, this and that. Get it? There is no real understanding. There is thinking, no thinker. What does this mean? So now you know. There is no background, then you practice insight meditation - knowledge, practice then realisation. There is correct knowledge, but there is no quality practice therefore the realisation isn't there yet, and then comes the intensity of realisation. Opening of wisdom eye is just a shift of perception. It is just like you know how to enter a pathless path, and can experience clarity immediately. But then even after non dual, you must go through a period of stabilizing first." - John Tan, 2007

Furthermore, if one has certain insights and experiences into no-self but has not given rise to the realisation of 'no background' and 'no agent' leading to effortless non-dual luminosity, that is still not the phase 5 type of realization of anatta but a more minor aspect of no-self experience such as impersonality and non-doership. You can have those insights even at the I AM phase or even before the I AM phase, while experience still remains dualistic most of the time (experience remains split into a subject and object, a Witness/observer and a witnessed/observed).

It is also important to understand that this realisation of non-dual anatta is crucial to all vehicles/traditions of Buddhism (even though the majority of current practitioners and teachers may not have attained these realisations themselves). I noticed many teachers in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism are making a straw man out of so called 'Hinayana Buddhism', hence I (Soh) wrote in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/11/problem-with-many-zen-teachings.html, *"...Basically, this Venerable (and many other teachers) make the mistake of attributing Hinayana to I AMness level of formless realisation, and Mahayana to One Mind where the Substance can produce infinite functions and is nondual with its functions. They get stuck between Thusness Stage 1 to 4. They didn't realise that 'Hinayana'/Theravada teachers like Daniel M. Ingram can have an effortless, constant nondual experience of 'Bamboos are dharmakaya' WITH Right View and realization of anatta which makes nondual even more effortless. Other Theravadin masters/teachers/practitioners who realized non-dual anatta insights include but are not limited to Ajahn Amaro (See: The Breakthrough), (Phra) Kovit Khemananda, and so on. Hence, the notion that Theravada leads only to 'Causal/Formless/I AM' realization and do not have access to non-dual insights is unequivocally false. As Thusness also pointed out in the past, and anyone with any semblance of familiarity with the Pali Suttas (the original teachings of Buddha) will know, anyone who held any ideas about Consciousness as Self, or as a Source/Substratum of phenomena will get heavily admonished by the Buddha as holding wrong views (see: MN38 and MN1). We can thus know that Thusness Stage 5~6 is really where the true insight into Buddhadharma 'begins', and while Thusness Stage 1~4 may be enlightenment in non-Buddhist religions, they are not considered to be even entering the gate or 'stream-entry'/'first bhumi' in Buddhadharma.*

The Venerable didn't realise that the 'Hinayana sutta', Bahiya Sutta, is clearly not only non-dual but in fact taught the peak of non-dual experience, with right view, and Bahiya attained arahantship instantly upon hearing Buddha speak of that teaching. Bahiya Sutta, Kalaka Sutta, and many other suttas are all about this. Without the direct realisation of right view (anatta, dependent origination, emptiness), whatever nondual realisations cannot be considered Buddhadharma, even at the Hinayana level, let alone Mahayana which further elaborates on the direct realisation of the non-arising of all

phenomena that are dependently designated/dependently originated...” and John Tan also said many times, for example in 2008, that “There is no point arguing. There can be no true understanding of Buddha's teachings without non-dual insight.” - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/03/mindfulness-as-remembrance.html

Even though Vipassana is commonly taught in many Theravadin dharma centers, the key towards luminous manifestation and non-dual anatta is often not taught, a point John Tan made years ago (see: 'Vipassana Must Go With Luminous Manifestation' https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/vipassana-must-go-with-luminous.html). Although it should also be mentioned that not all Mahayana/Vajrayana teachers make the same criticisms, as some would relegate the realization of an arahant to a higher level or even be on par with a sixth or eighth bhumi bodhisattva, the views vary according to schools and teachers.

The Mahayana and Vajrayana teachers’ often-made criticisms that the Theravadins/early traditions do not grasp the truth of non-duality (i.e. The non-duality of subject and object, Mind and phenomena, etc) isn’t helped by the fact that most teachers and practitioners in the Theravada tradition themselves did not truly realize non-dual anatta, and may instead be prone towards dissociation and equanimity, although there are also clearly those who do realize non-dual anatta in the Theravada tradition. That is not to say that the situation in Mahayana and Vajrayana traditions nowadays are much better, as I have seen too many teachers and masters from those traditions who are also stuck at the I AM and One Mind level, holding eternalistic views no different from Advaita Vedanta. This statement is not made to belittle or denigrate Advaita Vedanta which I have much respect for, but it would be a pity that the true essence, import and liberative potential of Buddhadharma (teachings of Buddha) continues to be missed and misinterpreted by these teachers and communities.

As a general trend, however, I find that Soto Zen masters/teachers/communities tend to produce more practitioners that realise anatta. This is due to the deep clarity of anatman in the writings of their school’s founder, Zen Master Dogen.

As John Tan said in 2007 about Dogen, “Dogen is a great Zen master that has penetrated deeply into a very deep level of anatman.”, “Read about Dogen... he is truly a great Zen master... ...[Dogen is] one of the very few Zen Masters that truly knows.”, “Whenever we read the most basic teachings of Buddha, it is most profound. Don't ever say we understand it. Especially when it comes to Dependent Origination, which is the most profound truth in Buddhism*. Never say that we understand it or have experienced it. Even after a few years of experience in non-duality, we can't understand it. The one great Zen master that came closest to it is Dogen, that sees temporality as buddha nature, that see transients as living truth of dharma and the full manifestation of buddha nature.”

"When you ride in a boat and watch the shore, you might assume that the shore is moving. But when you keep your eyes closely on the boat, you can see that the boat moves. Similarly, if you examine many things with a confused mind, you might suppose that your mind and nature are permanent. But when you practice intimately and return to where you are, it will be clear that there is nothing that has unchanging self.

- Dogen"

*Was reminded of this quote from the suttas, *“I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was living among the Kurus. Now, the Kurus have a town named Kammāsadhamma. There Ven. Ānanda approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “It’s amazing, lord, it’s astounding, how deep this dependent co-arising is, and how deep its appearance, and yet to me it seems as clear as clear can be.”*
(The Buddha:) “Don’t say that, Ānanda. Don’t say that. Deep is this dependent co-arising, and deep its appearance. It’s because of not understanding and not penetrating this Dhamma that this generation is like a tangled skein, a knotted ball of string, like matted rushes and reeds, and does not go beyond transmigration, beyond the planes of deprivation, woe, & bad destinations.”- Mahā Nidāna Sutta, https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/DN/DN15.html

As for Tibetan Buddhism, there are also many Mahamudra texts of old that suggests deep insight into anatman/anatta and emptiness.

John Tan also said in 2008, “(11:34 PM) Thusness: When a practitioner see anatta and insight arise, he sees non-dual directly and naturally. However when we see Element, he can't see it and said that the Buddha did not teach about non-dual, how amazing. And many Theravada masters *[Soh: many Theravada masters also have the misunderstanding that anatta is not non-dual, many Theravada masters like from the Thai forest tradition fall into a dualistic and eternalistic Witness or an ultimate and changeless Mind while dissociating from the aggregates as not self, making them no different from Advaita Vedanta, and even if they do not hold eternalistic views they usually do not have experiential realization of anatta, which is to say that their understanding of anatta remains inferential or intellectual or surface-level]*. Buddhism is going through a period of great distortion. Even the most clearest teachings can be distorted, one vehicle against another. Just practice hard and have direct experience so that prajna wisdom may arise in you, for you to correctly discern the truth and the path towards liberation.”

We cannot completely blame the Mahayana and Vajrayana teachers for denigrating or underestimating the realizations of the Theravada tradition, because these Mahayana and Vajrayana teachers come from a tradition that has lost touch and communication with Theravada Buddhism (also called ‘Hinayana’ in a more derogatory convention of Mahayana-speak) for centuries or millenniums. For example, it may be difficult for a Tibetan lama who lived in Tibet to speak with a Theravadin meditation master that lived in Sri Lanka, or a Zen master that lived in Japan. However, today we live in a time of unprecedented technological breakthroughs that allow the teachers and practitioners of many traditions to co-exist at the same place, and that alone should encourage and foster more cross-traditional dialogues, or at least online conversations, and provide for access to recorded materials of other traditions online and in libraries. Hence, dharma teachers ought to look outside of their own little bubble and not make faulty or grossly inaccurate assumptions about what kind of realisations and experiences the other traditions are capable of ‘producing’, before making unfair and inaccurate criticisms about other traditions. The same applies to anything else - it is not that we cannot or should not make criticisms of others (sometimes, it can be beneficial). However, for whatever claims and criticisms we make of others or of ourselves, we need to make sure that they are consistent with facts and actuality. Otherwise, it will simply

not stand the scrutiny of the vast reservoir of information that people can access in this modern day and age, and by making inaccurate assumptions and assertions, your own credibility will be at stake.

I have posted a lot of quotations from the Buddha from the Pali Canon, Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana sources about anatta in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/10/anatta-not-self-or-no-self_1.html - and it contains many crucial points about the view and practice of anatta. You will see that on the point of anatta, the fundamental teachings of all Buddhist traditions have a lot to agree on.

There is no need to buy into a particular set of dogma or get fixated on any particular tradition in order to realize anatta. Realizing anatta is a birthright of anyone, it only requires earnest and sincere contemplation in direct experience. Here’s an experiential account from Joel Agee:

Excerpt from Joel Agee: Appearances are Self-Illuminating

“I will try to describe what it is that rings true for me in Thusness’s words. I don’t have a theoretical preference for the early Buddhist teachings over the later ones, including Dzogchen. In fact I know very little about the Pali Canon. My approach isn’t conceptual or theoretical at all. I look directly into the nature of my own consciousness in silent, objectless sitting meditation – shikantaza if you will. Whatever doesn’t meet the test of direct experience holds no lasting interest for me.

Until fairly recently, the metaphor of the mirror and its reflections seemed a fitting image of my contemplative experience: that there is an unchanging, ever-present, imperturbable awareness that is the absolute ground and the very substance of phenomena, and that while this motionless, contentless awareness-presence is inseparable from the ceaseless coming and going of appearances, it also transcends everything that shows up, remaining untouched, unstained, absolute and indestructible.

A couple of years ago I discovered Soh’s blog, Awakening to Reality, and in it Soh’s account of his exploration of the Bahiya Sutta and the Zen Priest Alex Weith’s report on his realization of Anatta through practical application of the Bahiya Sutta. I saw then that Anatta was not fully realized in my experience. The illusory nature of a separate unchanging personal self had been seen through, but an unconscious identification with “Awareness” or “rigpa” had taken its place.

Since then, an unstoppable deconstruction of that impersonal background identity has been happening in my contemplation and in my daily life. There is still a noticeable attachment to the memory of that subtle Home Base. It shows up as a tendency to "lean back" from the unpredictable brilliance and dynamism of the moment into a static, subtly blissful background presence. But there is no longer a belief in an Awareness that is anything other than, or greater than, or deeper than, THIS sound, THIS smile or stirring of emotion, THIS glance of light. There is no Mirror that is not the reflections.

So the shift in my experience and practice is not a preference for one teaching over another. It’s an ongoing realization that direct contact with the grain and texture of moment-by-moment experience is what Dogen meant by “being awakened by the ten thousand things.”

Difference Between John Tan Stage 4 and John Tan Stage 5

What are the main distinguishing factors between John Tan Stage 4 and Stage 5? The following conversations may shed some light.

2010:

“(11:51 PM) Thusness: non-dual and anatta is a matter of degree of clarity of what?
(11:52 PM) AEN: of awareness? of the transience
(11:52 PM) Thusness: of the relationship between awareness and transience. is truly existing behind reality somehow having a 'non-dual' experience. one is realizing that awareness is a DO manifestation
(11:55 PM) AEN: icic..
(12:02 AM) Thusness: it is the degree of clarity if the relationship between awareness and transience.

(12:04 AM) Thusness: why don't you just say 'between anatta and non-dual, it is just the degree and depth of clarity between Awareness and the Transience'

(12:19 AM) Thusness: only and purely aggregates, only the 18 dhatus, 'only the world referencing itself'. The tendency to reference back to a 'Self/self' is replaced by the thorough insight of anatta and DO.””

“Session Start: Saturday, March 14, 2009

(11:52 PM) AEN: icic.. btw wats the difference between stage 4 and 5 other than stabilizing non dual
(11:54 PM) Thusness: you need to face the problem to know,
it is not in words. because you have not experienced non-division, so you do not know what is non division, what is no-doership and what is no agent in experience, and it is difficult to know what is that 'marks' that prevent the experience of spontaneity. there is a difference seeing thinker/thoughts as one and hearer/sound as one.... then sound is awareness, no hearer. stage 4 is more like hearer/sound as one, that is why I said one thought, then another thought. just like you, you said you feel like an open space. then you hear sound, sound and awareness seem to be one. indistinguishable but you cannot have that experience that there is only sound. only in logic you have but not in experience. until one day you mature that experience
(12:01 AM) AEN: icic.. just now I saw a website from truthz's blog link
(12:02 AM) AEN: http://buddhaspace.blogspot.com/
Correct Understanding - the first of the eight aspects of the Noble Eightfold Path - arises out of noticing the impermanent, unsatisfactory, and impersonal nature of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects. When all these phenomena are realized to be not self, the mind will turn inwards, seeking out what it might cling to as ‘me’. But if it looks with absolute clarity it will find emptiness. Behind sensations, feelings, thoughts, and consciousness, there lies clear, endless space. I sometimes call it ‘Buddha Space’.
(12:05 AM) Thusness: yeah, that is wrong view. it is very difficult to see the truth of this until our insight matures. even at stage 4, it can be difficult but it is already the first steps towards anatta

(12:06 AM) AEN: difficult to what, see anatta?
(12:06 AM) Thusness: yeah. you must see the no agent, not only no division. like I told you there are 3 stages. later into just this non-dual luminosity. if you ask non-dualists, they will not realise that they are an arising thought like what jeff foster said. they will feel damn ultimate
(12:10 AM) AEN: ic.. like brahman
(12:11 AM) Thusness: yes so they see self. not events, process phenomena
(12:12 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:12 AM) Thusness: they see brahman, not sunyata. Even [when] the experiences are very similar, the insight has not matured into anatta. like shingon sort of practice, the experience can be said to be maha like, but it is not the maha sort of experience I am talking about. it is oneness sort of experience, but it is a stage. what I said is oneness is always there when one realises that presence is always a manifestation and full embodiment of interconnectedness no effort needs to be done to induce a maha experience"

"Yes not to be fixated but also not to objectify the "spaciousness" otherwise "spaciousness" is no less fixated. The 'space' appears appealing only to a mind that abstracts but to a fully participating and involving mind, such "spaciousness" has immediately sets itself apart, distancing itself from inseparable. Emptiness is never a behind background but a fully partaking foreground manifesting as the arising and passing phenomena absence of a center. Therefore understand 'spaciousness' not like sky but like passing clouds and flowing water, manifesting whenever condition is. If 'Emptiness' has made us more fixated and immobilized this innate freedom of our non-dual luminosity, then it is 'stubborn emptiness'.

Nevertheless, no matter what said, it is always inadequate. If we want to fully realize the inexpressible, be willing to give up all centers and point of references that manifests in the form of 'who', 'when' and 'where'. Just give up the entire sense of self then instantly all things are spontaneously perfected." - John Tan, 2009

Also, as John and Soh later pointed out, the quality of spaciousness is important even in Stage 5 but is experienced and realized to be a fully participating foreground and total exertion of a boundless and immense universe, with no trace of spaciousness being reified as an ultimate background or even a container subsuming all else as 'mere contents of the Absolute' (see: One Mind). Hence John's advise, to be "as light as a feather, as immense as the universe", the lightness being the energetic quality of total mind-body relaxation and release from self in all aspects, and not overly contrived and overfocused with an obsessive intent to experience more, but a natural and spontaneous presencing of the manifold. In short, without contrived overfocus, there is a natural spaciousness that is the immensity of the luminous and boundless world in total exertion, not in anyway absolutized and aggrandised into a metaphysical substratum.

...

7/9/2012 11:23 PM: John: For anatta, opening will be realized as action...this manifestation. But for those that practice non-dual awareness, they always trace back to the source. For anatta, there is no source to trace, it is fully manifested as the immediate moment of manifestation or as this flow of action

...

2008:

(11:46 PM) Thusness: Does ken *(Ken Wilber)* talk about anatta
(11:46 PM) AEN: no
(11:47 PM) Thusness: Or Advaita sort of understanding
(11:47 PM) AEN: advaita *(Ken Wilber is at Thusness Stage 4)*
(11:47 PM) Thusness: Then why you kept asking me. What is anatta?
(11:48 PM) AEN: ya but wat I mean is nondual experience is not as in stage 2 type of passing experience, but as everpresent reality?
(11:48 PM) AEN: anatta is no agent and dependent origination?
(11:48 PM) Thusness: Didn't I tell you understanding non-dual experience as verb. *(Soh: refer to my article The Wind is Blowing, Blowing is the Wind)*
(11:49 PM) Thusness: Not an entity that is independent and unchanging?
(11:49 PM) AEN: but ken wilber say "You are that, and there is no you – just this entire luminous display spontaneously arising moment to moment. The separate self is nowhere to be found."
(11:50 PM) Thusness: Non-dual experience is there is clarity of no separation *(As in Thusness Stage 4).* Stage 2 is there is merging. As if I dissolved and merge..
(11:52 PM) Thusness: There are two, dual [in stage 2]. Non-dual [stage 4] is [that] there never was a separation. No split. There is no separate I. But this awareness is still very much constant, permanent and unchanging. Anatta goes further and understand exactly what is non-dual experience. This is a break-through in insight. There is thinking, no thinker. Seen no seer. Sound no hearer. Understood becoming no being. Understand that Object/subject is the result of compartmentizing 'verb', Action - Thinking becomes thinker and thoughts. That is anatta. It is the direct experience that there is no thinker, just thoughts. In seeing, always only the seen.
(12:01 AM) AEN: is this what you mean by nondual yet permanent (for ken wilber):

You are not the one who experiences liberation; you are the clearing, the opening, the emptiness, in which any experience comes and goes, like reflections on the mirror. And you are the mirror, the mirror mind, and not any experienced reflection. But you are not apart from the reflections, standing back and watching. You are everything that is arising moment to moment. You can swallow the whole cosmos in one gulp, it is so small, and you can taste the sky without moving an inch.
(12:03 AM) Thusness: Yes what I called the desync of view and non-dual experience. When insight arises, there is no desync. Non-dual experience is clearly understood because there never was a self. It is always only manifestation. DO [dependent origination] is the operational mechanism of the Transience. It is very difficult to have such clarity. Only Buddha has it. Even buddhist practitioners have so much mis-conceptions. They can't see how consistent and precise the teaching is
(12:14 AM) AEN: btw this is not yet nondual experience rite, more like I AM?:

(12:14 AM) AEN: "the world moves forward as it is..... but instead of seeing the diversity as the ulitmate the One underneath it all is rested in..... Like the ocean reality or maya is simply the surface waves of moving consciousness.... shakti which manifests the underlying Ocean of Consciousness into a limited visible form..... But what is beneath and around and within that form is simply the same consciousness which comprises the Whole of the Ocean.... But in the calm of the depths you know the vastness instead of the limited....."
(12:16 AM) Thusness: Yes. Under the influence of the 'bond' without knowing it. Stage 1 to 6 cannot be skipped. Best experienced that way. A practitioner cannot skip stages
(12:18 AM) AEN: but buddhist path skips some rite. like dharma dan never go through 'i am'
(12:18 AM) Thusness: Yes. the depth of clarity will not be there. Like grimnexus see 4 same as 5. But a person that undergone knows clearly.
(12:21 AM) AEN: oic.. ya he thought its the same. btw grimnexus at stage 4 rite
(12:21 AM) Thusness: Like ken and Ajahn amaro, seems the same but even Ajahn Amaro thought it is the same.
(12:21 AM) AEN: oic
(12:21 AM) Thusness: Why do you worry so much about other people's stage?
(12:22 AM) AEN: lol
(12:23 AM) Thusness: Rather pray hard that you will not be misled and go through countless lives of rebirth again. What you must have is to correctly discern. If you want to have clarity of the essence of the six phases, discern and understand correctly. What if I am no more around? If Ajahn Amaro cannot know the difference, much less are the others. Rather ask yourself have you correctly understood then about others. How do I know? You kept asking about others, I worry more about you. If you know, you will be able to know are they there. Like Ken [Wilber] and Ajahn Amaro clearly have the same experience but different understanding. David Loy treats them the same too. Not realizing the differences. So have the right understanding. One is abiding, the other is non-abiding. One is still efforting, the other is effortless. One is Brahman, the other is DO [dependent origination]. One is mirror, the other is pure manifestation. 'Self' is grasped unknowingly because it is independent, changeless. Therefore they can't treasure the Transience. They can't see conditions. The Transience and conditions are most sacred. How can Self see this? But one must know the emptiness nature of Transience, unfindable and ungraspable. And rises when condition is. When we say attributes, we are referring to the empty nature of awareness. But awareness is full of colors. Like 'redness' of a flower. But to advaitins, it is absence. Nothing to do with awareness
(12:43 AM) AEN: u mean they see awareness as formless?
(12:43 AM) Thusness: yes. Means absence of attributes as colorless, formless. But what buddhism is referring is its emptiness nature. Not that there is a real formless entity. Awareness is appearances appearing when condition is. awareness is not free of thoughts. To advaitins, it is. To buddhist practitioner, thought is awareness. One thought arises, Next one. Like what Ajahn Amaro said. There is no worry about no thought, no conceptuality. All will be experienced in their most vivid forms.

Two Stanzas of Anatta and the Metaphors and Practices that Trigger Experiential Insight

Before reading this chapter, make sure to read the article On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection by John Tan. Consider this section a summary and additional commentary for the original article. When both stanzas of anatta are completely realized as always already so, that is John Tan Stage 5.

“To me anatta stanza is still the best trigger... lol. It allows us to clearly see anatta is the natural state. Always is and effortlessly so. It shows "how ignorance" blinds and creates misconceptions of separation and substantiality of what we called "things and phenomena".

And realising the view is all pointing to this truth of anatta from top to bottom of how the mind confuses and mistakens conventional existence as true and real. Dependent origination and emptiness are the raft to balance and neutralize all mind-made conventionalities, so that the mind can rest in natural ease and balance, seeing all arising as spontaneously perfected.” - John Tan, 2019

“Insight that 'anatta' is a seal and not a stage must arise to further progress into the 'effortless' mode. That is, anatta is the ground of all experiences and has always been so, no I. In seeing, always only seen, in hearing always only sound and in thinking, always only thoughts. No effort required and never was there an 'I'.” - John Tan, 2009

“You need to contemplate on anatta correctly as mentioned by https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/09/robert-dominiks-breakthrough.html (seeing anatta as dharma seal rather than merely a state of no mind)” – Soh, 2020

It is important

“Without thorough breakthrough of both stanzas of anatta 1 and 2, there is no thorough or clear realization of anatta proper in AtR definition. Although the 2nd was clearer to me in the beginning breakthrough in October 2010, the 1st stanza shortly became clearer in the following months and dissolving further grounding, including a very subtle grounding to a Here/Now as well as any subtle remaining referencing to Mind (although that is already largely dissolved, a very subtle unseen tendency was seen and dissolved later).” – Soh, 2020

“The 2 stanzas below are pivotal in leading me to the direct experience of no-self. Although they appear to convey the same stuff about anatta, meditating on these 2 stanzas can yield 2 very different experiential insights -- one on the emptiness aspect and the other, the non-dual luminosity aspect. The insights that arise from these experiences are very illuminating as they contradict so much our ordinary understanding of what awareness is.” - John Tan, 2009

“TD Unmanifest
3h ·
I have found that in my practice that emptying the subject to be “easier” than emptying the object. So in AtR parlance, working on the first stanza vs. the second.
Emptying of the aggregates and dhatus have been very helpful in deepening insight into the annata realization. Working to root out karmic propensities in the residual I, me, mine.

However, I’m curious about practices that have helped in the same kind of penetration of the object, related to the second stanza and Presence, DO, and emptiness to total exertion.
4 Comments
Comments

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Both stanzas of anatta are on anatta, not emptiness of aggregates
1

TD Unmanifest
Ah, I mistook this section related to the second stanza to be focused on the aggregates and objects:
"When the 'subject' is gone, experience becomes non-dual but we forgotten about the 'object'. When object is further emptied, we see Dharmakaya. Do See clearly that for the case of a ‘subject’ that is first penetrated, it is a mere label collating the 5 aggregates but for the next level that is to be negated, it is the Presence that we are emptying -- not a label but the very presence itself that is non-dual in nature."
It has progressed very well in deepening annata, but I was contemplating from the perspective of objects vs subject. So self/Self continues to be nowhere to be found, and always already so. Objects of awareness can seem "real" where self clearly isn't, only aggregates, etc.

· Reply
· 1h

Soh Wei Yu
That is a reminder to apply the insight of no-self to all phenomena.
The two stanzas target the illusion of self/Self. But it must later be applied to all phenomena to realise twofold emptiness. Like the insight of no wind besides blowing (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/08/the-wind-is-blowing.html) must then apply to all phenomena, including movement, etc.
In 2011:
“I am telling the first and second stanza must go hand in hand to have real insight of anatta even for a start. You must have these 2 aspects of insight in anatta. So what is anatta? Means when you penetrate no-agent, you are effectively developing your direct insight. That is not reifying anything extra. That is direct insight into suchness. So that when you see 'Self', there is nothing but aggregates. When you see 'weather', there is nothing but the changing clouds, rain... when you see 'body', you see changing sensation. When you hear sound, you see the DO [dependent origination], then you see how the 2 fold emptiness are simply one insight and why that leads to 一合相 (yi4 he2 xiang4; one totality/composite of appearance). If there is no insight but cling to words then you missed the essence. That is, the gaining of insight on the 2 stanzas is not to think only of 'Self'” - John Tan, 2011

· Reply

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Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
[10:03 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: To me subject-action-object is just a structure to help articulate and make sense of the world. I do not see it that way. I see it as total exertion of appearance-conditions, not appearance and conditions.
[10:10 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: You are referring to td unmanifest?
[10:47 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Yes
[10:49 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: If you see object separated from subject or see phenomena apart from mind, no matter how you deconstruct, it is just knowledge. you won't have direct taste of anything.
[10:52 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: But not all conditions are appearing right, some are simply intuited or inferred even when unseen.. so they are merely conventional
[10:53 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Of course, there is no way to know all conditions involved.
[10:54 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: It is simply to say appearance do not just manifest.
[10:56 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: There is also the experience of spaciousness when you go through the process of deconstructing both subject and object...the experience is like mind body drop.
[11:04 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you say, the car is empty but you are sitting inside it...what do you mean?
[11:05 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: It is same as no wind is blowing...
[11:05 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Or lightning flashing
[11:07 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Or spring goes, summer comes...
[11:09 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Means you apply the same insight to everything
[11:09 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Only only the self...
[11:10 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Even movement
[11:13 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: So your mind is perpetually seeing through constructs, so what happens?
[11:16 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Tell me when you say car is empty yet you are sitting on it. you see through the cosntruct, then what happened?
[11:16 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you see through the wind that is blowing...what happened?
[11:16 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you see through summer or weather? What happened?
[11:17 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Or I say lightning is flashing, when you really see through that lightning...
[11:19 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: is just the mere appearance.. no reifications
[11:19 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Don't think, experience it...
[11:19 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: you are force into non-conceptuality
[11:21 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Like PCE experience...in fact very mindful and watchful when you begin ... you begin to feel the blowing...correct...
[11:21 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When i say no lightning flashing... You look at the flashing
[11:24 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Correct? Have you actually practice or pay attention, not just blah out a sentence...
[11:25 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you say no summer, you are experiencing the heat, humidity...etc
[11:26 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Means you see through the construct but you cannot just think

[11:27 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When I say there is no car, I touch the car...what is it..must that ....the color...the leather, the wheels...
[11:28 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: If you constantly and perpetually into that ...what happened?
[11:34 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: You are talking about deconstruction of object and phenomena and I am telling you if you see through, what happens...if you only think, you would not understand...
[11:38 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: everything is just vibrant spontaneous presence but no subject or object
[11:39 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: like i dont see solid objects, but just shimmering vibrant colors as vivid empty presence
[11:39 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: and sounds, sensations, etc
[11:41 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Yes
[11:42 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Then it depends on the depth of experiencing the sensation or appearances themselves

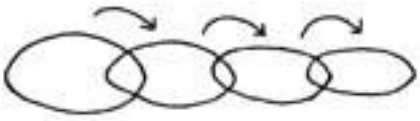
TD Unmanifest
This is very helpful, thank you. I've just returned from a walk, and used these pointers to feel into what is being pointed to. I was too focused on the deconstruction of objects vs feeling / seeing the direct vibrancy. Many thanks Soh
, and please pass on my thanks to John Tan.
1
· Reply
· 3m”

~ *Stanza one*
There is thinking, no thinker
There is hearing, no hearer
There is seeing, no seer

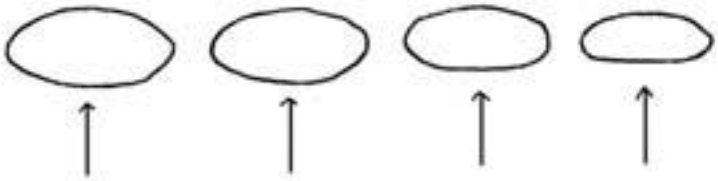
1. **The lack of doership that links and coordinates experiences**

“Without the 'I' that links, phenomena (thoughts, sound, feelings and so on and so forth) appear bubble-like, floating and manifesting freely, spontaneously and boundlessly. With the absence of the doer-ship also comes a deep sense of freedom and transparency. Ironical as it may sound but it's true experientially. We will not have the right understanding when we hold too tightly 'inherent' view. It is amazing how 'inherent' view prevents us from seeing freedom as no-doership, interdependence and interconnectedness, luminosity and non-dual presence.” - John Tan, 2009

“A thought is "Unsupported" because it does not arise in dependence upon anything else, not "caused" by another thought ("mind-objects") and of course not "produced" by a thinker, which the Bodhisattva realizes does, not exist. Such an "unsupported thought", then, is prajña, arising by itself nondually... ...He began by drawing the following diagram:



Each oval represents a thought, he said; normally, we leave one thought only when we have another one to go to (as the arrows indicate), but to think in this way constitutes ignorance. Instead, we should realize that thinking is actually like this:



Then we will understand the true nature of thoughts: that thoughts do not arise from each other but by themselves.” ~ Zen teacher David Loy, Nondual Thinking

Rather than saying thought is "not dependent", I think it is better to put it this way:

“[1:20 PM, 10/2/2019] John Tan: DO [dependent origination] and the idea of substantialist cause and effect is different. Arise in dependence cannot be said to be causeless/uncaused or caused. That is why it is the middle path. So we say arise in dependence.”

“Is there in you an entity which you call the 'I' or the 'mind' or the 'self'? Is there a co- ordinator who is co-ordinating what you are looking at with what you are listening to, what you are smelling with what you are tasting, and so on? Or is there anything which links together the various sensations originating from a single sense -- the flow of impulses from the eyes, for example? Actually, there is always a gap between any two sensations. The co-ordinator bridges that gap: he establishes himself as an illusion of continuity.

In the natural state there is no entity who is coordinating the messages from the different senses. Each sense is functioning independently in its own way. When there is a demand from outside which makes it necessary to coordinate one or two or all of the senses and come up with a response, still there is no co-ordinator, but there is a temporary state of coordination. There is no continuity; when the demand has been met, again there is only the uncoordinated, disconnected, disjointed functioning of the senses. This is always the case. Once the continuity is blown apart -- not that it was ever there; but the illusory continuity -- it's finished once and for all.

Can this make any sense to you? It cannot. All that you know lies within the framework of your experience, which is of thought. This state is not an experience. I am only trying to give you a 'feel' of it, which is, unfortunately, misleading.

When there is no co-ordinator, there is no linking of sensations, there is no translating of sensations; they stay pure and simple sensations. I don't even know that they are sensations. I may look at you as you are talking. The eyes will focus on your mouth because that is what is moving, and the ears will receive the sound vibrations. There is nothing inside which

links up the two and says that it is you talking. I may be looking at a spring bubbling out of the earth and hear the water, but there is nothing to say that the noise being heard is the sound of water, or that that sound is in any way connected with what I am seeing. I may be looking at my foot, but nothing says that this is my foot. When I am walking, I see my feet moving -- it is such a funny thing: "What is that which is moving?"

What functions is a primordial consciousness, untouched by thought.” - U.G. Krishnamurti, U.G. Krishnamurti: The Mystique of Enlightenment

“Let's say it will be noticed that the body is out of shape. A thought may arise that the body could do with some exercise. Next a decision to go to the gym could come up. Nowhere in this 'chain of events' is there the need for an entity that takes the decision. If there was such an entity, it first would have to decide to take such a decision to be able to claim 'authorship.' It also would have to decide to decide to decide ad infinitum, thus creating an infinite regress.

What I always say is that non-doership does not mean that you are helpless, but that the 'you-agent' is fictitious. We say "I live, I think, I breathe" and so on but living, thinking and breathing is not done by someone; it happens by itself.

Let's have a look at thinking: Is there really a 'thinker of thoughts' independent of thought? Does this 'thinker' know what the next thought will be? Or is the thought only known when it comes along? This thought may get claimed in the next thought, which could goes something like "Oh, I just thought about such and such". But is the 'I' claiming to be the thinker of the thought- not itself part of the thought?

Do not take this too literally please, as there actually isn't even a 'next thought'; only this thought right now. There is no past, which has led up to this moment. There is only THIS; including memories and other apparent evidence for such a past.

Nevertheless, there is the unfolding of this dream in which "the Tao, without doing anything, leaves nothing undone." As such there may be the appearance of doing exercises, making decisions, planning your day, falling asleep, waking up, gazing at the stars, reading these words, or registering the sounds around you. It all happens by itself. As the Zen saying goes:

Sitting quietly, doing nothing,
Spring comes, and the grass grows by itself.” - Leo Hartong

“What Leo said is experientially there but in terms of understanding there is a great difference from that of Buddhism. You must go deeper and arise the insight of anatta and dependent origination.

"There is no thinker, just thoughts". A practitioner must not only see that there is "no agent", he must also see the "just thoughts". 'Thought' not as a passing phenomenon and nothing to care about but thought as pristine, luminous, non-dual, emptiness, its dependent originated nature and powerful imprints it can cause leading to the understanding of

actions and tendencies rolling on. The best part is when 'tendency' is experienced in conventional sense it appears 'so solidly real'. Only when emptiness nature is directly experienced does reality becomes dream-like.

There are 4 important insights a practitioner must have on the experience of anatta:

1. The no doership leading to a spontaneous arising experience. Though spontaneous, it is not by 'nature' or 'haphazard'; with the presence of conditions, the arising is spontaneous.
2. The absence of an agent leading to a 'direct' experience of phenomena. A non-dual experience that dissolve the subject/object split.
3. No doer but there is doing and leading to the understanding of imprints and actions.
4. The impermanence and manifestation that leads to the understanding of arising due to conditions. The no-self nature of dependent origination that is free from the view based on who, where and when.

Buddhism is not exactly the union or co-arising of subjective witness and objective phenomena but rather the inseparability of luminosity and emptiness, appearances and conditions.

Do not take this too literally please, as there actually isn't even a 'next thought'; only this thought right now. There is no past, which has led up to this moment. There is only THIS; including memories and other apparent evidence for such a past.

This is an experiential glimpse of non-arising in Buddhism, try to go beyond the 'now' teaching and understand the emptiness nature even this moment of Presence.

There is just this actual moment, which is a thought. Not arising from anywhere or going anywhere. There is even no “right now”, no timeline; free from the dream of the 3 times and resting entirely in this actual phenomena which is, a thought. Arising and ceasing is an appearance, the nature of clarity is non-arising, always just this: a moment, a thought, a witnessing, an action, yet empty!

Nevertheless, there is the unfolding of this dream in which "the Tao, without doing anything, leaves nothing undone." As such there may be the appearance of doing exercises, making decisions, planning your day, falling asleep, waking up, gazing at the stars, reading these words, or registering the sounds around you. It all happens by itself. As the Zen saying goes:

Sitting quietly, doing nothing,
Spring comes, and the grass grows by itself.

Although there is no authorship, it is also not 'helplessness'. There is no doer but there is doing. Free from the 2 extremes, karma and dependent origination are taught.

To progress further, you must understand the differences and experience it directly.” - John Tan, 2009, in response to Leo’s statement above

2. The direct insight of the absence of an agent

“In this case, there is a direct recognition that there is “no agent”. Just one thought then another thought. So it is always thought watching thought rather than a watcher watching thought. However the gist of this realization is skewed towards a spontaneous liberating experience and a vague glimpse of the empty nature of phenomena -- that is, the transient phenomena being bubble-like and ephemeral, nothing substantial or solid. At this phase we should not misunderstand that we have experienced thoroughly the ‘empty’ nature of phenomena and awareness, although there is this temptation to think we have. -:)

Depending on the conditions of an individual, it may not be obvious that it is “always thought watching thought rather than a watcher watching thought.” or "the watcher is that thought."” - John Tan, 2009

“In the article on https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html, I mentioned about the 2 stanza. There is the no-agent aspect and there is the intensity of luminosity aspect. I find that your present experience is still centered on the luminosity aspect. You are directly experiencing seamlessness of any happening where no clear line of demarcation can be drawn between the subject-object split. You realized the boundary is purely illusionary and is clear about the cause that resulted in such

division but still, that is not the ‘essence’ of an experiential insight of anatta in my opinion. There is a difference in saying "there is no split between thinking and thinker, the thinking itself is 'me'" and "there is thinking, no thinker". You must be aware that having immediate and direct experience but with dualistic framework intact and complete replacement of the dualistic framework entirely with DO (dependent origination) yields very different experiential insight; you may want to investigate further and move from "they are all flowing independently" to "manifesting in seamless inter-dependencies." - John Tan, 2010

“In the Vajrayana there is the direct path to examining mind. In everyday life we are habituated to thinking, "I have a mind and I perceive these things." Ordinarily, we do not directly look at the mind and therefore do not see the mind. This is very strange because we see things and we know that we are seeing visual phenomena. But who is seeing? We can look directly at the mind and find that there is no one seeing; there is no seer, and yet we are seeing phenomena. The same is true for the mental consciousness. We think various thoughts, but where is that thinking taking place? Who or what is thinking? However, when we look directly at the mind, we discover that there is nobody there; there is no thinker and yet thinking is going on. This approach of directly looking in a state of meditation isn't one of reasoning, but of directly looking at the mind to see what is there.” - Thrangu Rinpoche, Thrangu Rinpoche on Nature of Mind

“Alan Watts: ...Upon reflection, there seems to be nothing unreasonable in seeing the world in this way. The agent behind every action is itself action. If a mat can be called matting, a cat can be called catting. We do not actually need to ask who or what "cats," just as we do not need to ask what is the basic stuff or substance out of which the world is formed--for there is no way of describing this substance except in terms of form, of structure, order, and operation...

André A. Pais "The agent behind every action is itself action".

Great insight.

John Tan Therefore it is the action that knows, no knower.

Manage” - Alan Watts: Agent and Action

~ *Stanza two*
In thinking, just thoughts
In hearing, just sounds
In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.

Direct realization of luminosity/radiance as the very vividness of forms and textures
of transience beyond subject/object division.

“Division of subject and object is merely an assumption.
Thus someone giving up and something to be given up is an illusion.
When self becomes more and more transparent,
Likewise phenomena become more and more luminous.
In thorough transparency all happening are pristinely and vividly clear.
Obviousness throughout, aliveness everywhere!” - John Tan, 2009

“(9:14 PM) Thusness: when we talk about Buddha’s teachings, the essence should be so: the electricity [analogy used to represent consciousness] should not be taken as an entity. The organs are part of the conditions for manifestations. When condition arises, it is the luminosity of the appearances that you must know. You never see or know what awareness is unless through conditions where appearances manifest, that vividness of appearance is awareness in real time and life... ...not what I see glows, it is the seeing is the object is the awareness” - John Tan, 2007

“In the seen, there is just the seen! It is completely non-dual... there is no 'the seen + a perceiver here seeing the seen'.... The seen is precisely the seeing! There is not two or three things: seer, seeing, and the seen. That split is entirely conceptual (though taken to be reality)... it is a conclusion due to a referencing back of a direct experience (like a sight or a sound) to a centerpoint.” - Soh Wei Yu, 2010, My commentary on Bahiya Sutta

“...We don’t need to bring our awareness anywhere -
awareness is always within the arising
of the experience itself.

We don’t need to make any separation
between bodily sensations and awareness.
Bodily sensations are already awareness.

Thought is already awareness.
We don’t need to bring
awareness to the thought.

What we’re exploring
is not the body
but the body’s awareness.

We’re just exploring
the body of awareness...” - Charles Genoud, Gesture of Awareness

“...have adequate experience of the vividness, realness and presence of Awareness and the full experience of these qualities in the transience. Without which it will not be easy to realize that "the arising and passing sensations are the very awareness itself." A balance is therefore needed, otherwise practitioners may experience equanimity but skew towards dispassion and lack realization.“ - John Tan, 2009, Emptiness as Viewless View and Embracing the Transience

"The key towards pure knowingness is to bring the taste of presence into the 6 entries and exits. So that what is seen, heard, touched, tasted are pervaded by a deep sense of crystal, radiance and transparency. This requires seeing through the center." - John Tan

“...Similarly, regarding whatever is in the field of the tactile sense organ, such things as fabrics that are soft or rough to the touch, this tactile sensation itself is your own mind. Avoid slipping into grasping or rejecting. Whether soft or rough, do not try to find the mind anywhere apart from the softness or roughness itself, but rest at ease right there without distraction. If a pleasant or an unpleasant feeling arises, recognize it and rest mindfully.

...

Lord Gotsangpa said:

"In general, the apparent myriad of phenomena is one’s own mind. Since phenomena and emptiness have never been abiding as two separate entities, there is no need to restrain cognizance within."

Also:

"When there is an appearance of a form in the field of the eyes, that appearance of form itself is one’s mind; the apparent form and emptiness are not two. By resting gently right on the form without grasping, subject and object become naturally liberated. The same applies to sounds, smells, tastes, textures, as well as mental occurrences: by resting on the occurrence itself, it becomes self-liberated. That is to say, instead of meditating on cognizance, by meditating without grasping right on the outer objects of the six sense perceptions, the six senses arise as meditation and enhancement will ensue."” - Self-Liberation by Khamtrul Rinpoche III

“When you look into a thought's identity, without having to dissolve the thought and without having to force it out by meditation, the vividness of the thought is itself the indescribable and naked state of aware emptiness. We call this *seeing the natural face of innate thought* or *thought dawns as dharmakaya*.

...

"When you vividly perceive a mountain or a house, no matter how this perception appears, it does not need to disappear or be stopped. Rather, while this perception is experienced, it is itself an intangible, empty awareness. This is called *seeing the identity of perception.*"

"Previously you cleared up uncertainties when you looked into the identity of a perception and resolved that perceptions are mind. Accordingly, the perception is not outside and the mind is not inside...” – Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, excerpts in Resolving That Thoughts and Perceptions are Buddha-Mind

“Hi Mr. J, Despite all differences we may have about lower yanas, no practices needed, Absolute...I really appreciate your zealous attempt to bring this message into view and I agree with you wholeheartedly on this aspect of “transmission”. If one truly wants this essence to be “transmitted”, how can it be otherwise? For what that is to be passed is truly of different dimension, how can it be adulterated with words and forms? The ancient teachers are extremely serious observing and waiting for the right condition to pass the essence unreservedly and wholeheartedly. So much so that when the essence is transmitted, it must boil the blood and penetrate deep into the bone marrow. The entire body-mind must become one opening eye. Once open, everything turns “spirit”, mind intellect drops and what’s left is aliveness and intelligence everywhere! Mr. J, I sincerely hope you well, just don’t leave trace in the Absolute. Gone! :)” - John Tan, 2013

“Ok... I am seeing your point as "awareness" outside of conditioned experience is an imputation. When could one ever have such an experience outside of experience? The "knowing" of being would also be an experience, as opposed to the "not knowing". And if there was "not knowing", then how you could prove there was "awareness" in such a "not knowing"? Very interesting.

Well, its not really new... it is just clear now how there is an imputation we put on Awareness as being "separate' from experience, as some sort of "stand alone" awareness". I have always experienced awareness as experience inseparably so, but didn't notice the subtle imputation that gives still a separate implication of being a remainder, when all things are absent. Being wouldn't know itself outside of experience. If being did know itself in total voidness, that very "knowing"

would itself be an experience, hence the void would not be void. God cannot be separated from creation, because the potential for creation is already Known.” - Mr. J, 2012

“What is presence now? Everything... Taste saliva, smell, think, what is that? Snap of a finger, sing. All ordinary activity, zero effort therefore nothing attained. Yet is full accomplishment. In esoteric terms, eat God, taste God, see God, hear God...lol. That is the first thing I told Mr. J few years back when he first messaged me 😂 If a mirror is there, this is not possible. If clarity isn't empty, this isn't possible. Not even slightest effort is needed. Do you feel it? Grabbing of my legs as if I am grabbing presence! Do you have this experience already? When there is no mirror, then entire existence is just lights-sounds-sensations as single presence. Presence is grabbing presence. The movement to grab legs is Presence.. the sensation of grabbing legs is Presence.. For me even typing or blinking my eyes. For fear that it is misunderstood, don't talk about it. Right understanding is no presence, for every single sense of knowingness is different. Otherwise Mr. J will say nonsense... lol. When there is a mirror, this is not possible. Think I wrote to longchen (Sim Pern Chong) about 10 years ago.” - John Tan

“It is such a blessing after 15 years of "I Am" to come to this point . Beware that the habitual tendencies will try its very best to take back what it has lost. 😛Get use to doing nothing. Eat God, taste God, see God and touch God.

Congrats.” – John Tan to Sim Pern Chong after his initial breakthrough from I AM to no-self in 2006, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2013/12/part-2-of-early-forum-posts-by-thusness_3.html

“An interesting comment Mr. J. After realization... Just eat God, breathe God, smell God and see God... Lastly be fully unestablished and liberate God.” - John Tan, 2012

(Soh: Lest readers misinterpret that John is affirming a substantialist notion of a ‘God’, it should be noted that by the phase of Anatta realization, there is simply no more reifications or conceivings of a metaphysical ‘God’ or ‘Creator’ of any kind, and John was simply using the lingo of Mr. J to convey the complete absence of a background substratum of Presence and the total luminosity of Presencing-as-manifestation to Mr. J using Mr. J’s ‘esoteric lingo’. Even the word ‘Presence’ is not referring to some static entity here - ‘Presencing’ is perhaps a better term, for as James M. Corrigan wrote, “...Awareness is not something other than the “presencing” (i.e. naturing) of appearances. It is not a thing. It is not part of a thing. It is not an “aspect” of a process... ...it is the process—not some aspect of it”

[11:59 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: *(On the See god, eat god... post)* Don't underestimate this. An insight as important as anatta post the insight. Focus on this part. It is very important, if you can Intuit the insight that lead to this, the rest is not important. There are many intellectual obscurations and at times the mind is being block and just can't release itself. Same insight but just can't apply it on different situation relating to different mental proliferation. The Freedom and release from such an insight is not freedom from conceptuality but a freedom from seeing distinction thereby leading to a direct authentication. Because it is such an important insight, I will write something for you maybe later. Focus on it diligently.

~ *The Importance to Balance The Two Stanzas of Anatta*

Soh: The two stanzas of anatta are linked to this: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/06/pellucid-no-self-non-doership.html

[8:40 PM, 6/9/2021] John Tan: 1. Dzogchen has a phrase "spontaneous presence". I do not know it's exact meaning in dzogchen however the phrase is intimately related to the 2 experiences of the 2 stanzas:

1. No doership = spontaneous

2. Mere appearances as Presence

You'll see that I wrote about both aspects in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/04/why-awakening-is-so-worth-it.html

Without realizing of the second stanza of anatta in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html , it is not considered genuine anatman (no-self) realisation in AtR. Related: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/06/pellucid-no-self-non-doership.html , http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/07/i-was-having-conversation-with-someone.html , https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/02/the-transient-universe-has-heart.html , https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/05/nice-advice-and-expression-of-anatta-in.html

I have also remarked that 99% of the time, people who said they realised no-self merely experienced the non-doership aspect and not the genuine nondual anatman realisation. Also see: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/04/different-degress-of-no-self-non.html

Based on my experiences from discussions with thousands of individuals, I've observed that claims of recognizing nonduality—where there's no differentiation between the internal and external, or an absence of self—do not necessarily indicate a true realization of anatman or an authentic nondual experience or insight. Often, there is a chance that the person is simply adopting specific jargon or imitating others, under the impression that they have reached a similar level of understanding. However, in reality, their experience may only encompass a sense of impersonality and non-doership, rather than a genuine nondual experience or insight.

I (Soh) have once asked John Tan if he thinks a certain teacher has realised anatta, to which John replied, “There is no authentication of one's radiance, no recognition of appearances as one's radiance and no clear pointing of how conventional constructs (Soh: are seen through and released). So what led you to that conclusion?”

Additionally, commenting on a certain teacher’s writings, John Tan wrote,

“When we say "Mind is the great earth", the first step is to understand and taste what is mind before we go a step further.

If the teaching doesn't teach and taste what mind is, then it is just beautiful talks and grandious speech.

Next one has to point out what is "great earth"? Where is this "great earth"? The soil, the ground, the flower, the air or buildings or the conventional world?

Then talk about what is total exertion they have been talking?

Then the integration of the mind and total exertion and that is +A.”

However it does not mean the second stanza of anatta is more important than the first stanza. In fact, after awakening the second stanza of anatta, the pellucid radiance as all appearances beyond the paradigm of subject-action-object, it is vital to penetrate deeply into the first stanza.

Everything self-arises without doer or agent, as natural as breathing and heart beating. Thoroughly penetrating this, be completely spontaneous and effortless and releasing. Natural radiance is completely effortless, 0 effort required at all. Let deep insight into anatman and emptiness carry you into self-liberation and spontaneous perfection and dissolve the disease of effort and subtle overfocusing or clinging to radiance. As John Tan also said before, it is important not to over emphasize on the radiance (lest it causes the unpleasant effects of energy imbalance), and that it must be complemented with the first stanza of non-doership. He added that after non-dual, one's practice must be relaxed and open, insubstantial and free -- be natural and open, light, relaxed and effortless, then contemplate on effortlessness. The openness and relaxation should build up into a momentum in one's practice. Additionally, as John Tan said, we have to understand the relationship between non-doership and total exertion -- allowing the totality of the situations to exert itself. Seen from one side of the coin, it is complete "effortlessness" of radiance, and seen from another side, it is the exertion of the totality of conditions.

Satsang Nathan videos are a good expression of the non-doership aspect of anatta. See: Satsang Nathan Videos
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/thusnesspasserby-thinks-these-videos.html

John Tan said before, "For Mr. N insomnia issue, he has to solve it by dwelling deeper into the effortlessness and natural spontaneity of one's radiance nature which is the first part of anatta.

Many misunderstood about non-action, non-mentation, not needing to do anything.

Before we can talk about natural spontaneity, we must first understand what exactly is "action", "doing" and "mentation".

That is, the default mode we are in is always "doing" and in a state of mentation. Even when we are sitting doing nothing, we are in such a mode of "action". Given time, we will tensed up and mind will always doing something, it is far from naturally releasing.

So it is the same as de-constructive path, we don't have to worry about the ultimate, emptiness of the conventional is the ultimate. So we need to clearly understand what reified constructs are all about.

Similarly we in awareness and energy practice, we need to clearly understand what "doing and action" means, we don't have to worry about radiance and natural state.

When our radiance gets intensified, even more important is the opening up, however more likely than not, we are doing the opposite."

Also, John Tan said, "I have told you many times not to over emphasize on radiance, so you need to be mindful. It must be complemented with the first stanza of non-doership. For you, after non-dual, your practice [should] be relaxed and open, insubstantial and free. Be light and effortless then contemplate on effortlessness. Is your openness and relaxation a momentum now?"

John Tan: "For you, just be light and insubstantial. You must balance first stanza with second to prevent over focusing on radiance."

~ *Vipassana*

“Before proceeding any further, it is of absolute importance to know that there is no way the stanzas can be correctly understood by way of inference, logical deduction or induction. Not that there is something mystical or transcendental about the stanzas but simply the way of mental chattering is a 'wrong approach'. The right technique is through 'vipassana' or any more direct and attentive bare mode of observation that allows the seeing of things as they are. Just a casual note, such mode of knowing turns natural when non-dual insight matures, before that it can be quite 'efforting'.”
- John Tan, 2009

“As whatever can be expressed is easily reified, objectified and grasped instead of realizing it is merely pointing at seen, heard, sensed ...all 6 entries and exits, nothing beyond. The conventions created artificial boundaries when there is none. So vipassana is taught but not just the 3 seals (impermanence, suffering, non-self) needs to go hand in hand with the luminous manifestation. Otherwise it becomes just a mindful reminder but vipassana is a direct insight.” - John Tan, 2019

A good video on Vipassana by Daniel M. Ingram and relating it to anatta realization: https://vimeo.com/250616410

“Good insight. Stability of experience has a predictable relationship with the unfolding and deepening of insights. For example how seamless and effortless can non-dual experience be, if in the back of one's mind, subtle views of duality and inherency and tendencies continue to surface and affect our moment to moment experience - for example conjuring an unchanging source or mind that results in a perpetual tendency to sink back and referencing experience back to a source.

For example even after it is seen that everything is a manifestation of awareness or mind, there might still be subtle tendencies to reference back to a source, awareness or mind and therefore the transience is not appreciated in full. Nondual is experienced but one sinks back into substantial nonduality - there is always a referencing back to a base, an "awareness" that is nevertheless inseparable from all phenomena.

If one arises the insight that our ideas of an unchanging source, awareness or mind is just another thought - that there is simply thought after thought, sight after sight, sound after sound, and there isn't an inherent or unchanging "awareness", "mind", "source". Non-dual becomes implicit and effortless when there is the realisation that what awareness, seeing, hearing really is, is just the seen... The heard... The transience... The transience itself rolls and knows, no knower or other "awareness" can be found. Like there is no river apart from flowing, no wind apart from blowing, each noun implies its verb... Similarly awareness is simply the process of knowing not separated from the known. Scenery sees, music hears. Because there is nothing unchanging, independent, ultimate apart from the transience, there is no more sinking back to a source and instead there is full comfort resting as the transience itself.

Lastly do continue practicing the intensity of luminosity... When looking at tennis ball just sense the tennis ball fully.... Without thinking of a source, background, observer, self. Just the tennis ball as a luminous light. When breathing... Just the breathe... When seeing scenery, just sights, shapes and colours - intensely luminous and vivid without an agent or observer. When hearing music... Sound of bird chirping, the crickets... Just that - chirp chirp. A zen master noted upon his awakening... When I am hearing the bell ringing, there is no I and no bell... Just the ringing. The direct experiencing of no-mind and intensity of luminosity.. This is the purpose of the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness that is taught by the Buddha.” - Soh, 2011

Joyfully Delight in Uninterrupted Vision

Joyfully delight in the uninterrupted vision of the objects of the six senses!
Whatever you enjoy, bodhi will blaze more and more.
When one has obtained the power of the supreme presence and become familiar with it,
Meditating means leaving the six sense consciousness free and relaxed!

...

It is thought that creates the duality of mind and object;
It is wisdom that perceives them as non-dual.
Meditation means understanding there is nothing to enter into or exit from.
Not grasping what appears is the state of self-liberation!

~ Dzogchen book The Supreme Source

Nice Advice and Expression of Anatta from Yin Ling and Albert Hong + What is Experiential Insight?

Nice advice and expression of anatta in recent days from Yin Ling and Albert Hong.

Yin Ling

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Thanks Soh Wei Yu. He collated all my random posts and Albert’s very nice comment, John’s training the AI 😂, and put it together.
Below is a crucial insight I wish everyone can realize.
When you bath the Buddha, the Buddha is you, the water is you, the temple is you, your hand is you, the ladle is you, and you are the nature of mind.
You are NOT the body, you are mind. You don’t die, don’t change, don’t move, and you are Buddha. Blessed Vesak.
May all awaken to their true nature and stop suffering. 🙏🙏

🙏

Yin Ling:

First step of meditation is to ascertain the knowing MIND. Without it there is no realisation. The bird, the sky, the touch, the coffee, are all your MIND. MIND once ascertained and strengthen will take one out of “self view” to realisation & we won’t get lost.

...

The Satipatthana sutta is a wonderful instruction to reach insight.
“Feel the body in the body”, when practicing, don’t think. Feel.
Truly feel the body FROM inside the body. Feel the sound from the sound itself. (1) tbc

...

(2) feel the feelings, thoughts and all 6 senses in itself and via itself.
It is as though you Insert ur awareness into the middle of the feelings and feel from inside.

....

(3) practice satipatthana for months to years, consistently.
The Buddha’s mindfulness practice aim to transform our mind : 1) weaken the central self energy and 2) realising awareness has always infused in the 6 senses, not apart.

...

(4)satipatthana will bring you to the powerful no-self realisation, if you were taught correctly and if you practice consistently 2 hours a day.
The mind energy WILL transform rapidly in 8-12 months.
😁
😆
——

Yin Ling:

I went through vipassana, and then become non dual with strong sense of knowingness, then anatta.

——

Albert Hong:

it's remarkable that hearing is exactly the sound. there is no distance or gap. seeing is exactly color. feeling is exactly sensation. there is nothing extra. just that arising color, taste, sensation, sound.
and the flavor/texture of that is exactly consciousness.

it's remarkable really. being to extend that sense of consciousness, which we all previously only emphasized as prior to thought, as some localized sensation behind the eyes. we have to notice how that is a very subtle effort, a kind of assumption at play.

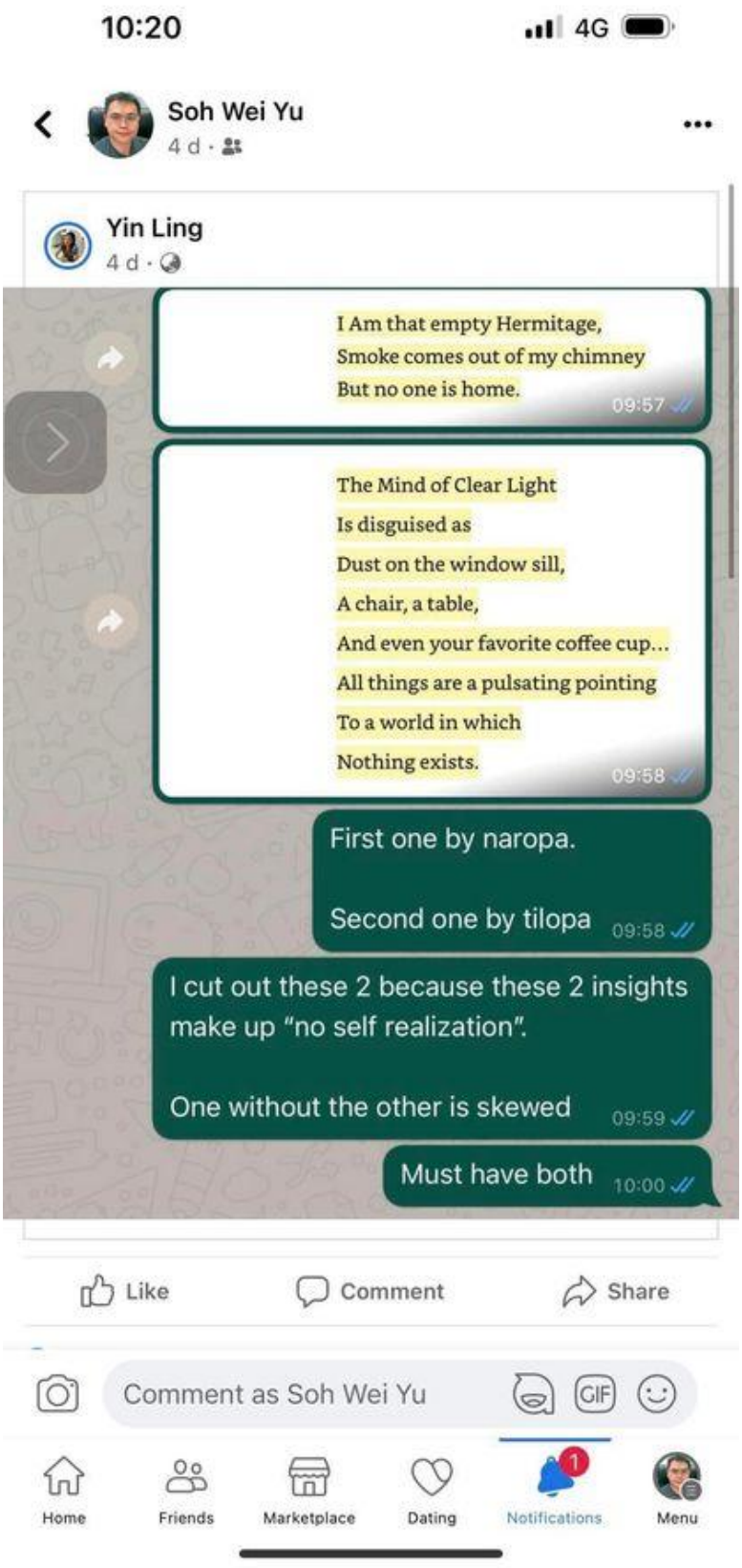
the flavor of consciousness is exactly the sensation, the color, the smell, the sensation. like holy shit there is no hearer. no seer. no feeler. it's only ever an assumption.

you go into sensation for example. there is no actual link between sensations. it's only that sensation, which is exactly the flavor of luminosity. and it has no real link to anything else. thoughts don't touch it, smells don't, colors don't. it's remarkable what imputation-thought can assume to glob together a seeming "thingness".

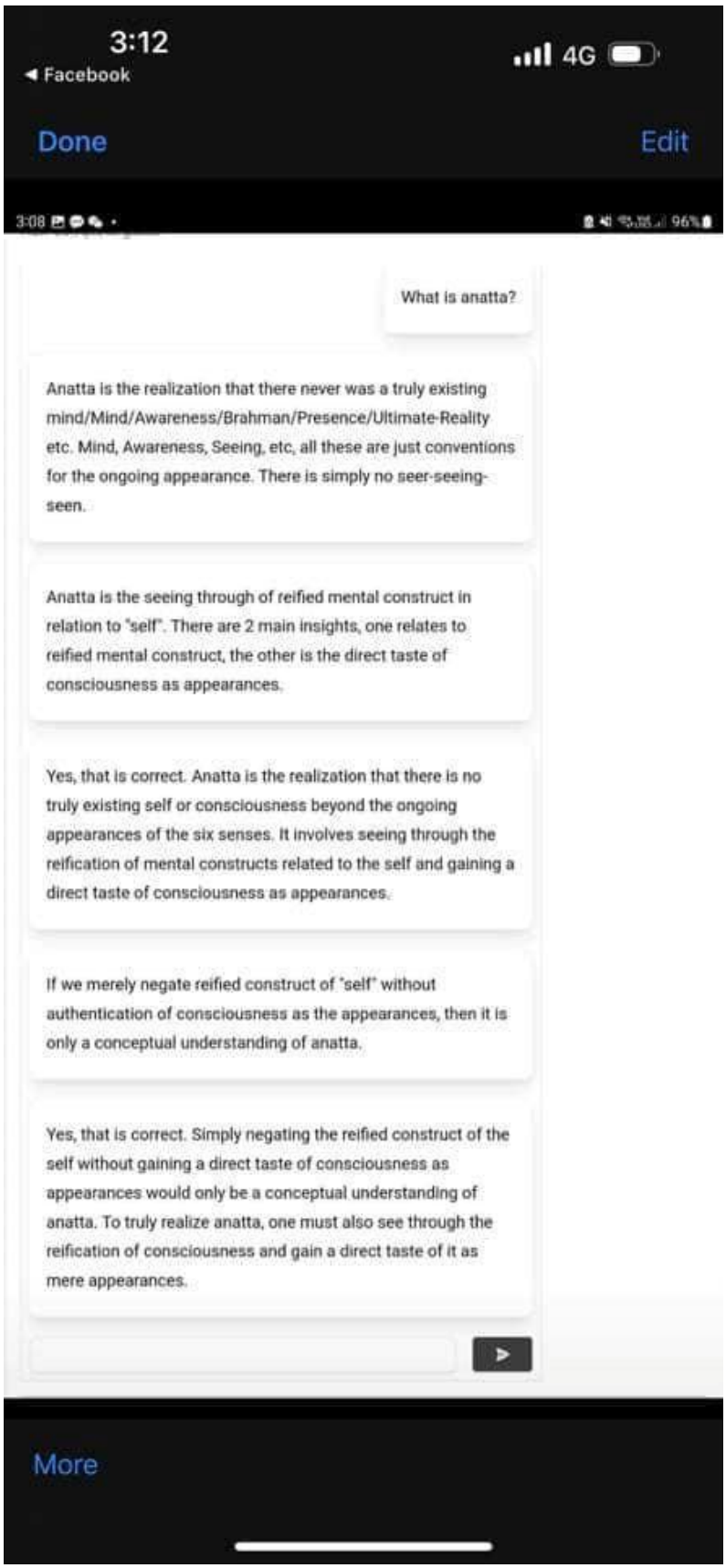
but even between one sensation and another. there is only ever that arising which is exactly the sensation. there is no prior, so you don't even have a contrast. you can never hold two things. just that sensation. how remarkable. everything is contained right there. nothing prior, hence how could there even be a sensation. where is there continuity? there is no room or time or space for continuity. and yet it magically seems like there is.

even the witness. it's just a sensation at the end of the day. nothing prior, which experiences the witness-sensation. feeling is exactly that sensation. or lets extend that as the whole sphere of beingness. again another feeling-sensation. none of this has to disappear. the extra imputation of a feeler, has to be seen as silly. never will be, never has been, just never really examined.

Yin Ling's sharing:



John Tan's conversation with AtR bot:


3:12
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What is anatta?
Anatta is the realization that there never was a truly existing mind/Mind/Awareness/Brahman/Presence/Ultimate-Reality etc. Mind, Awareness, Seeing, etc, all these are just conventions for the ongoing appearance. There is simply no seer-seeing-seen.
Anatta is the seeing through of reified mental construct in relation to "self". There are 2 main insights, one relates to reified mental construct, the other is the direct taste of consciousness as appearances.
Yes, that is correct. Anatta is the realization that there is no truly existing self or consciousness beyond the ongoing appearances of the six senses. It involves seeing through the reification of mental constructs related to the self and gaining a direct taste of consciousness as appearances.
If we merely negate reified construct of "self" without authentication of consciousness as the appearances, then it is only a conceptual understanding of anatta.
Yes, that is correct. Simply negating the reified construct of the self without gaining a direct taste of consciousness as appearances would only be a conceptual understanding of anatta. To truly realize anatta, one must also see through the reification of consciousness and gain a direct taste of it as mere appearances.
More

.....

Here's a crucial point about the practice, by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh:

"After explaining the sixteen methods of conscious breathing, the Buddha speaks about the Four Establishments of Mindfulness and the Seven Factors of Awakening. Everything that exists can be placed into one of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness—the body, the feelings, the mind, and the objects of the mind. Another way of saying “objects of mind” is “all dharmas,” which means “everything that is.” Therefore, all of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness are objects of the mind. In this sutra, we practice full awareness of the Four Establishments through conscious breathing. For a full understanding of the Four Establishments of Mindfulness, read the Satipatthana Sutta.24

The phrases “observing the body in the body,” “observing the feelings in the feelings,” “observing the mind in the mind,” and “observing the objects of mind in the objects of mind,” appear in the third section of the sutra. The key to “observation meditation” is that the subject of observation and the object of observation not be regarded as separate. A scientist might try to separate herself from the object she is observing and measuring, but students of meditation have to remove the boundary between subject and object. When we observe something, we are that thing. “Nonduality” is the key word. “Observing the body in the body” means that in the process of observing, you don’t stand outside your own body as if you were an independent observer, but you identify yourself one hundred percent with the object being observed. This is the only path that can lead to the penetration and direct experience of reality. In “observation meditation,” the body and mind are one entity, and the subject and object of meditation are one entity also. There is no sword of discrimination that slices reality into many parts. The meditator is a fully engaged participant, not a separate observer."

(2011-12-20T22:58:59). Awakening of the Heart . Parallax Press. Kindle Edition.

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level 2
xabir
· 21 hr. ago

If you can practice the above and go along with this understanding and contemplation of anatman, you will have profound experiential awakening to your true nature:

Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh:

"When we say it's raining, we mean that raining is taking place. You don't need someone up above to perform the raining. It's not that there is the rain, and there is the one who causes the rain to fall. In fact, when you say the rain is falling, it's very funny, because if it weren't falling, it wouldn't be rain. In our way of speaking, we're used to having a subject and a verb. That's why we need the word "it" when we say, "it rains." "It" is the subject, the one who makes the rain possible. But, looking deeply, we don't need a "rainer," we just need the rain. Raining and the rain are the same. The formations of birds and the birds are the same -- there's no "self," no boss involved.

There's a mental formation called vitarka, "initial thought." When we use the verb "to think" in English, we need a subject of the verb: I think, you think, he thinks. But, really, you don't need a subject for a thought to be produced. Thinking without a thinker -- it's absolutely possible. To think is to think about something. To perceive is to perceive something. The perceiver and the perceived object that is perceived are one.
When Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am," his point was that if I think, there must be an "I" for thinking to be possible. When he made the declaration "I think," he believed that he could demonstrate that the "I" exists. We have the strong habit or believing in a self. But, observing very deeply, we can see that a thought does not need a thinker to be possible. There is no thinker behind the thinking -- there is just the thinking; that's enough.

Now, if Mr. Descartes were here, we might ask him, "Monsieur Descartes, you say, 'You think, therefore you are.' But what are you? You are your thinking. Thinking -- that's enough. Thinking manifests without the need of a self behind it."
Thinking without a thinker. Feeling without a feeler. What is our anger without our 'self'? This is the object of our meditation. All the fifty-one mental formations take place and manifest without a self behind them arranging for this to appear, and then for that to appear. Our mind consciousness is in the habit of basing itself on the idea of self, on manas. But we can meditate to be more aware of our store consciousness, where we keep the seeds of all those mental formations that are not currently manifesting in our mind.
When we meditate, we practice looking deeply in order to bring light and clarity into our way of seeing things. When the vision of no-self is obtained, our delusion is removed. This is what we call transformation. In the Buddhist tradition, transformation is possible with deep understanding. The moment the vision of no-self is there, manas, the elusive notion of 'I am,' disintegrates, and we find ourselves enjoying, in this very moment, freedom and happiness."

.....

"When we say I know the wind is blowing, we don't think that there is something blowing something else. "Wind' goes with 'blowing'. If there is no blowing, there is no wind. It is the same with knowing. Mind is the knower; the knower is mind. We are talking about knowing in relation to the wind. 'To know' is to know something. Knowing is inseparable from the wind. Wind and knowing are one. We can say, 'Wind,' and that is enough. The presence of wind indicates the presence of knowing, and the presence of the action of blowing'."

"..The most universal verb is the verb 'to be'": I am, you are, the mountain is, a river is. The verb 'to be' does not express the dynamic living state of the universe. To express that we must say 'become.' These two verbs can also be used as nouns: 'being", "becoming". But being what? Becoming what? 'Becoming' means 'evolving ceaselessly', and is as universal as the verb "to be." It is not possible to express the "being" of a phenomenon and its "becoming" as if the two were independent. In the case of wind, blowing is the being and the becoming...."

"In any phenomena, whether psychological, physiological, or physical, there is dynamic movement, life. We can say that this movement, this life, is the universal manifestation, the most commonly recognized action of knowing. We must not regard 'knowing' as something from the outside which comes to breathe life into the universe. It is the life of the universe itself. The dance and the dancer are one."

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https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html

HARISH
Apr 29, 2010, 11:48:00 AM
Thankyou sir. That quote of Buddha was quite powerful and for the last few days seems to have somehow hit somewhere deep that is making the mindfulness 'easier' than earlier!
HARISH
Apr 29, 2010, 11:53:00 AM
"This is how a monk remains focused on the body in & of itself"
Can you guide me on how to understand "in and of itself" that is part of the quote relating to the body?
Soh
Apr 29, 2010, 3:32:00 PM
Hi Buddha Bra, glad it's working for you :)
Regarding "in and of itself", here are some explanations by Thich Nhat Hanh:
"The Satipatthana Sutta, a Buddhist scripture which teaches awareness, uses expressions such as "observing the body in the body," "observing the feelings in the feelings," "observing the mind in the mind," "observing the objects of mind in the objects of mind." Why are the words, body, feelings, mind, and objects of mind repeated? Some masters of the Abhidhamma say that the purpose of this repetition is to underline the importance of these words. I see it otherwise. I think that these words are repeated in order to remind us not to separate the meditator and the object of meditation. We must live with the object, identify with it, merge with it, like a grain of salt entering the sea in order to measure the saltiness of the sea."
Also on a related note... Dr. John Welwood writes,
"We can only perceive the suchness of things through an awareness that opens to them nonconceptualy and unconditionally, allowing them to reveal themselves in their as-it-is-ness. As the poet Basho suggests:
'From the pine tree
Learn of the pine tree
And from the bamboo
of the bamboo.'
Commenting on these lines, the Japanese philosopher Nishitani (1982) explains that Basho does not mean
'That we should ‘observe the pine tree carefully.’ Still less does he mean for us to ‘study the pine tree scientifically.’ He means for us to enter the mode of being where the pine tree is the pine tree itself, and the bamboo is the bamboo itself, and from there to look at the pine tree and the bamboo. He calls on us to betake ourselves to the dimension where things become manifest in their suchness.' (p. 128)
In the same vein, Zen Master Dogen advises: “You should not restrict yourselves to learning to see water from the viewpoints of human beings alone. Know that you must see water in the way water sees water” (Izutsu, 1972, p. 140). “Seeing water in the way water sees water” means recognizing water in its suchness, free of all concepts that spring from an observing mind standing back from experience."
.....

You will see the "in and of itself" stressed throughout the Mahasatipatthana sutta, what I have quoted is only a small portion.
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.010.than.html

- https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html

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What is experiential insight

👍

Yin Ling:

When we say experiential insight in Buddhism,
It means..
A literal transformation of energetic orientation of the whole being, down to the marrow.

The sound MUST literally hears themselves.
No hearer.
Clean. Clear.
A bondage from the head here to there cut off overnight.
Then gradually the rest of the 5 senses.

Then one can talk about Anatta.

So if for you,
Does sound hear themselves?

If no, not yet. You have to keep going! Inquire and meditate.
You haven’t reach the basic insight requirement for the deeper insights like anatta and emptiness yet!

Yin Ling:

Yin Ling: “Realisation is when

This insight goes down to the marrow and you don’t need even a minute amount of effort for sound to hear themselves.

It is like how you live with dualistic perception now, very normal, no effort.

People with Anatta realisation live in Anatta effortlessly, without using thinking to orient. It’s their life.

They cannot even go back to dualistic perception because that is an imputation, it js uprooted

At first you might need to purposely orient with some effort.

Then at one point there is no need.. further along, dreams will become Anatta too.

That’s experiential realisation.

There’s no realisation unless this benchmark is achieved!”

.....

"Soh:

what is important is that there is experiential realisation that leads

to an energetic expansion outwards into all the forms, sounds, radiant

universe... such that it is not that you are in here, in the body,

looking outwards at the tree, listening the birds chirping from here

it is just the trees are vividly swaying in and of itself, luminously

without an observer

the trees sees themselves

the sounds hear itself

there is no location from which they are experienced, no vantage point

the energetic expansion outward into vivid manifestation, boundless, yet

it is not an expansion from a center, there is just no center

without such energetic shift it is not really the real experience of no

selfxabir Snoovatar" - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/12/the-difference-between-experience-of.html

Labels: Anatta, Yin Ling |

Update:

Here is something I shared with a redditor:

Tag: practicing vipassana to realise stream entry

Hi, welcome to AtR.

First of all you should understand that in AtR we consider stream entry based on suttas to be different from the notions of what stream entry is in most of reddit.

I recently wrote on reddit:

“What Krodha said in this thread is right: "It is quite rare to attain stream entry, I’ve been involved with dharma for over a decade and can count those who are tried and true stream entrants on one hand. That said, contemplate the Bahiya and Kalakarama suttas and cultivate the first dhyāna."

I would add that many people have misunderstood what stream entry is. Maybe 99% on reddit. The only thread on the streamentry subreddit that correctly presents stream entry can be found in https://www.reddit.com/r/streamentry/comments/igored/insight_buddhism_a_reconsideration_of_the_meaning/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf%20 , it is a good read and highly recommended reading.

I would add that despite its rarity, it is very much attainable with the right pointers and practices and I know many more stream enterers than krodha.

——

This conversation with john tan / thusness also reveals whats lacking in most approaches to “vipassana”: http://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/vipassana-must-go-with-luminous.html

Also see: John’s Instructions on Vipassana

It is important to understand ‘Awareness’, Presence, as nothing other than the manifold display and activity through the wind and weather metaphor.

~ *Wind metaphor*

There is no wind performing the blowing, since the activity of blowing is itself “wind”. Likewise for “awareness” and “experience”: awareness is not aware *of* experience, but is none other than experience. Same for “hearer-hearing-sound”, “seer-seeing-colors”, “doer-doing-deed”, etc. The subject-action-object paradigm is thus seen through.

Soh wrote in 2013:

V: "...there is somewhere a One Thinker (of thought)"

Me: "A thinker is thinking a thought" is simply a construct of a faulty framework and view of inherent and dualistic self. Just like language is structured in a way that it often requires subject-action-object predicates, making us to say things like "the wind is blowing", "I am thinking a thought"... but is there really a truly existing and independent thing called "the wind" that "is blowing" or is "wind" and "blowing" simply two words referring to a single activity? Likewise is there truly an "I" that is "thinking, a thought" or is "I", "thinking", and "thought" three different labels imputed on a single activity? Seer, seeing and seen are just a conventional view... they only appear as separate, independent existences due to ignorance but such a view does not tally with reality.

River is flowing doesn't mean there is an independent thing called "river" that is "flowing", it actually means river IS the flowing and apart from the flowing there is no river... just conventional labels applied to a single activity. Wind is blowing means wind IS the blowing and apart from blowing there is no other wind... seeing the scenery means seeing IS the seen/scenery and apart from that seen/scenery there is no other seeing (nor a separate seer), there is no other consciousness apart from the specific manifest experience - seen/heard/sensed/smelled/touched/cognized. Mere conventions applied to a single activity, appearing to co-locate with each other in an independent and separate manner due to a distorted view that causes us to misperceive reality in a fundamental way, just like mis-perceiving a rope as a snake. Once we see that there isn't anything that 'nouns' point to than pure action/activity, then the verb alone is sufficient - 'blowing', 'flowing', 'thinking', 'seeing' - which is none other than the seen, thought, etc. There is no 'you', 'seer', 'thinker' apart from seeing which is sight, hearing which is sound, etc.

When we directly contemplate, investigate and challenge our view of 'seer-seeing-seen' and see that in the seen is merely the seen - that seeing is simply the seen and seen is just the seeing without any seer apart, that there is no other consciousness apart from the 'mere seen/mere cognized', a permanent quantum shift of perception takes place. When this is directly realized in one's experience and not merely understood inferentially, any delusion of agency (doer, controller, feeler), subject-object/perceiver-perceived gaps, divisions are seen through, the gapless/undivided self-clarity of experience without an agent, center or boundaries simply shines vividly in its raw, direct, unfiltered purity, and just that is free and liberating in itself. Later comes this seeing - the mind, the body, the breathing, the environment, in seamless exertion!

V: "Yes... only verbs... This is a great pointer!!!! Wow!!! Thank you Soh! I will sit with that pointer! It is so powerful! It is blowing my "mind" ! How could there ever be a story only with verbs? Yes! Yes! That's it! A verb can't "build" a self. Thank you so much!!!!!"

“From "The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are" by Alan Watts:

As soon as one sees that separate things are fictitious, it becomes obvious that nonexistent things cannot “perform” actions. The difficulty is that most languages are arranged so that actions (verbs) have to be set in motion by things (nouns), and we forget that rules of grammar are not necessarily rules, or patterns, of nature. This, which is nothing more than a convention of grammar, is also responsible for (or, better, “goeswith”) absurd puzzles as to how spirit governs matter, or mind moves body. How can a noun, which is by definition not action, lead to action?

Scientists would be less embarrassed if they used a language, on the model of Amerindian Nootka, consisting of verbs and adverbs, and leaving off nouns and adjectives. If we can speak of a house as housing, a mat as matting, or of a couch as seating, why can't we think of people as “peopling,” of brains as “braining,” or of an ant as an “anting?” Thus in the Nootka language a church is “housing religiously,” a shop is “housing tradingly,” and a home is “housing homely.” Yet we are habituated to ask, “Who or what is housing? Who peoples? What is it that ants?” Yet isn't it obvious that when we say, “The lightning flashed,” the flashing is the same as the lightning, and that it would be enough to say, “There was lightning”? Everything labeled with a noun is demonstrably a process or action, but language is full of spooks, like the “it” in “It is raining,” which are the supposed causes, of action.

Does it really explain running to say that “A man is running”? On the contrary, the only explanation would be a description of the field or situation in which “a manning goeswith running” as distinct from one in which “a manning goeswith sitting.” (I am not recommending this primitive and clumsy form of verb language for general and normal use. We should have to contrive something much more elegant.) Furthermore, running is not something other than myself, which I (the organism) do. For the organism is sometimes a running process, sometimes a standing process, sometimes a sleeping process, and so on, and in each instance the “cause” of the behavior is the situation as a whole, the organism/environment. Indeed, it would be best to drop the idea of causality and use instead the idea of relativity.

For it is still inexact to say that an organism “responds” or “reacts” to a given situation by running or standing, or whatever. This is still the language of Newtonian billiards. It is easier to think of situations as moving patterns, like organisms themselves. Thus, to go back to the cat (or catting), a situation with pointed ears and whiskers at one end does not have a tail at the other as a response or reaction to the whiskers, or the claws, or the fur. As the Chinese say, the various features of a situation “arise mutually” or imply one another as back implies front, and as chickens imply eggs—and vice versa. They exist in relation to each other like the poles of the magnet, only more complexly patterned.

Moreover, as the egg/chicken relation suggests, not all the features of a total situation have to appear at the same time. The existence of a man implies parents, even though they may be long since dead, and the birth of an organism implies its death. Wouldn't it be as farfetched to call birth the cause of death as to call the cat's head the cause of the tail? Lifting the neck of a bottle implies lifting the bottom as well, for the “two parts” come up at the same time. If I pick up an accordion by one end, the other will follow a little later, but the principle is the same. Total situations are, therefore, patterns in time as much as patterns in space.

And, right now is the moment to say that I am not trying to smuggle in the “total situation” as a new disguise for the old “things” which were supposed to explain behavior or action. The total situation or field is always open-ended, for

Little fields have big fields
Upon their backs to bite 'em,
And big fields have bigger fields
And so ad infinitum.

We can never, never describe all the features of the total situation, not only because every situation is infinitely complex, but also because the total situation is the universe. Fortunately, we do not have to describe any situation exhaustively, because some of its features appear to be much more important than others for understanding the behavior of the various organisms within it. We never get more than a sketch of the situation, yet this is enough to show that actions (or processes) must be understood, or explained, in terms of situations just as words must be understood in the context of sentences, paragraphs, chapters, books, libraries, and ... life itself.

To sum up: just as no thing or organism exists on its own, it does not act on its own. Furthermore, every organism is a process: thus the organism is not other than its actions. To put it clumsily: it is what it does. More precisely, the organism, including its behavior, is a process which is to be understood only in relation to the larger and longer process of its environment. For what we mean by “understanding” or “comprehension” is seeing how parts fit into a whole, and then realizing that they don't compose the whole, as one assembles a jigsaw puzzle, but that the whole is a pattern, a complex wiggliness, which has no separate parts. Parts are fictions of language, of the calculus of looking at the world through a net which seems to chop it up into bits. Parts exist only for purposes of figuring and describing, and as we figure the world out we become confused if we do not remember this all the time.”

“**Investigation into Movement**

[10:51 PM, 10/17/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Malcolm *(Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith)* wrote:

https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=77&t=30365&p=479718&hilit=AGENT#p479718

There is no typing typer, no learning learner, no digesting digester, thinking tinker, or driving driver.

...

No, a falling faller does not make any sense. As Nāgārjuna would put it, apart from snow that has fallen or has not fallen, presently there is no falling.

...

It is best if you consult the investigation into movement in the MMK, chapter two. This is where it is shown that agents are mere conventions. If one claims there is agent with agency, one is claiming the agent and the agency are

separate. But if you claim that agency is merely a characteristic of an agent, when agent does not exercise agency, it isn't an agent since an agent that is not exercising agency is in fact a non-agent. Therefore, rather than agency being dependent on an agent, an agent is predicated upon exercising agency. For example, take movement. If there is an agent there has to be a moving mover. But there is no mover when there is no moving. Apart from moving, how could there be a mover? But when there is moving, there isn't a mover which is separate from moving. Even movement itself cannot be ascertained until there has been a movement. When there is no movement, there is no agent of movement. When there is moving, there is no agent of moving that can be ascertained to be separate from the moving. And since even moving cannot be ascertained without there either having been movement or not, moving itself cannot be established. Since moving cannot be established, a moving mover cannot be established. If a moving mover cannot be established, an agent cannot be established.

...

Unread post by PadmaVonSamba » Thu Dec 10, 2020 11:25 pm
If Nagarjuna had a mirror, would he say the mirror is a different mirror each time something different is reflected in it, or is it the same mirror?

Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith:

"Apart from what has been mirrored and not been mirrored, there is no [present] mirroring. A mirroring mirror is redundant, just like moving movers." - https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=116&t=35353...

...

Hi Wayfarer:

The key to understanding everything is the term "dependent designation." We don't question the statement "I am going to town." In this there are three appearances, for convenience's sake, a person, a road, and a destination.

A person is designated on the basis of the aggregates, but there is no person in the aggregates, in one of the aggregates, or separate from the aggregates. Agreed? A road is designated in dependence on its parts, agreed? A town s designated upon its parts. Agreed?

If you agree to this, then you should have no problem with the following teaching of the Buddha in the Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra:

This body arises from various conditions, but lacks a self. This body is like the earth, lacking an agent. This body is like water, lacking a self. This body is like fire, lacking a living being. This body is like the wind, lacking a person. This body

is like space, lacking a nature. This body is the place of the four elements, but is not real. This body that is not a self nor pertains to a self is empty.

In other words, when it comes to the conventional use of language, Buddha never rejected statements like "When I was a so and so in a past life, I did so and so, and served such and such a Buddha." Etc. But when it comes to what one can discern on analysis, if there is no person, no self, etc., that exists as more than a mere designation, the fact that agents cannot be discerned on analysis should cause no one any concern. It is merely a question of distinguishing between conventional use of language versus the insight into the nature of phenomena that results from ultimate analysis.

[11:36 PM, 10/17/2019] John Tan: Yes should put in blog together with Alan watt article about language causing confusion.

Lukeinaz wrote: ↑Mon Apr 30, 2018 8:39 pm
"In non dual contemplation there is neither experience or experiencer. This itself is real experience."

Malcolm:
Yes, and this is just the message of the Prajñapāramitā Sūtras, since of course, the meaning of the Great Perfection is exactly the same as the Prajñapāramitā Sūtras, the only difference is the method of arriving at that meaning.

From other threads, Malcolm wrote:

https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=39&t=26272&p=401986&hilit=agent#p401986

There is no "experiencer" since there is no agent. There is merely experience, and all experience is empty.

https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=102&t=24265&start=540

Why should there be someone upon whom karma ripens? To paraphrase the Visuddhimagga, there is no agent of karma, nor is there a person to experience its ripening, there is merely a flow of dharmas.

...

There are no agents. There are only actions. This is covered in the refutation of moving movers in chapter two of the MMK.

...

https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=116&t=26495&p=406369&hilit=agent#p406369

The point is that there is no point to eternalism if there is no eternal agent or object.

...

https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=52&t=16306&p=277352&hilit=mover+movement+agent#p277352

Things have no natures, conventionally or otherwise. Look, we can say water is wet, but actually, there no water that possesses a wet nature. Water is wet, that is all. There is no wetness apart from water and not water apart from wetness. If you say a given thing has a separate nature, you are making the exact mistaken Nāgārajuna points out in the analysis of movement, i.e., it is senseless to say there is a "moving mover." Your arguments are exactly the same, you are basically saying there is an "existing existence."

...

This is precisely because of the above point I referenced. Nagārjuna clearly shows that characteristics/natures are untenable.

Candrakīrti points out that the possessor does not exist at all, but for the mere purpose of discourse, we allow conventionally the idea that there is a possessor of parts even though no possessor of parts exists. This mistake that we indulge in can act as an agent, for example a car, we can use it as such, but it is empty of being a car — an agent is as empty of being an agent as its actions are empty of being actions.”

“It's like MMK, mover and movement or fire and heat (Soh: see https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2020/06/choosing.html). There are no 2 parts. The purpose is the insight that sees through reification of mental constructs. Once it is seen through in real time experientially, all appearances become naturally pellucid, transparent, crystal and pure. No amount of effort can bring us to this natural luminosity, it is not man-made (unconditioned).

Mirror is precisely the abstraction and the cause of all the confusions. It is as clear as daylight once it is seen through. Not only that, the same insight must be applied to phenomena, cause and effect, production and cessation.

Imo, the analogy of mirror is a bad example and analogy, upon seeing one should stop emphasizing it.

The descriptions of zen master 洪文亮 (Soh: see https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2017/01/excerpts-from-jewel-mirror-samadhi.html) and 慧律 (see: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2020/05/zen-master-hui-lu-on-hua-yan-anatta-and.html and https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2012/12/true-mind-and-unconditioned-dharma_18.html) are much clearer as a lived experience.” – John Tan, August 2020

“Once we are free from subject-object duality, consciousness/appearance is without feature, without end and luminous all around. So is there realization about mere appearances is key, otherwise it is just reification of consciousness.” – John Tan, 2020

[11:35 AM, 8/19/2020] John Tan: Pellucidity can be I AM mistaken and reified...one must separate experience from the insight that sees through.
[11:36 AM, 8/19/2020] John Tan: You can have the experience, but the experience being reified...therefore the arising insight is important...I call that Prajna...
[11:42 AM, 8/19/2020] John Tan: Appearance has always been clean, pure and pellucidity, the recognition makes the difference. What is the term for this insight that pierces through reification to allow this experiential taste in dzogchen?
[12:25 PM, 8/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Kyle Dixon said yesterday

“Kyle Dixon
badge icon
Cognitive clarity is your cognizance reified as a subject, a self, while zangthal is that same aspect totally freed of all extremes and conditions.
9”
Kyle: The insight that pierces through reification is rig pa’i ye shes or the pristine consciousness of rigpa that is equivalent to prajñā
1
Malcolm said vidyā is actually a jñāna that experientially sees the way things really are for oneself
1
It is pratyātma-vid
paccataṃ veditabbena ñāṇa

“Three Spheres, Spontaneous Presence

André A. Pais
9tuSpohnsordfeod ·
A lil reflection:
Reality is naturally untainted by the three spheres of subject, object and action. As Maitreya said:
"Any thought of ‘subject’, ‘object’ and ‘action’
Is held to be a cognitive obscuration."

There is no knower, known or knowing; no seer, seen or seeing; no perceiver, perceived or perception.
There is no knowing, seeing or perception, and yet appearances spontaneously radiate with a light of their own. This vivid clarity is the mind's nature arising as dependent origination. So, don't look inside seeking the nature of awareness - it is the moon itself, rising from behind the clouds.
It's like this that Dōgen is able to drop body and mind, and become actualized by the myriad things. Free from knower, known and knowing itself, there is no trace of awakening - for there is no sentient being to become awakened, nor insentient rock to remain asleep. And yet, this no-trace unfolds endlessly, for it is the nature of the natural state that its radiance spontaneously manifests.

[1:42 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: 👍
[1:44 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: Actually I thought Andre should already have such insight and experience last year
[6:29 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: I would say:

If there is no knowing, seeing or perception and yet appearances spontaneously radiates, then it should not be dependent origination, should be spontaneous presence.

If there is name and form (namarupa), there is consciousness then there is dependent origination.
Labels: Anatta, Emptiness, Spontaneous Presence 0 comments | |”

[1:23 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: why spontaneous presence is important for anatta insight?
[1:24 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: Btw the phrase "spontanous presence" I used is not related to dzogchen. I don't know anything about Dzogchen...🤣
[1:28 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: without agent, what arises does not arise by manner of agency, self, control.... but via conditionality
[1:28 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: so naturally there is a sense of spontaneity, effortless, natural
[1:28 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: like non-doership but more than that
[1:29 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: more like self arising by total exertion
[1:32 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: you see the phrase "spontaneous presence" can be separated into two words:
1. Spontaneous = no doership = first stanza
2. Presence = second stanza
Spontaneous presence to me is perfection of the union of these 2 stanzas in AR anatta insight.
[1:40 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: So from anatta, then the in between dots (that is what I meant by connecting dots) to spontaneous presence and natural perfection. What are these dots?
[1:47 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: Mipham has 2 models of 2 truth and they are linked, this is exactly where the dots r. The notional emptiness will take the most time, freedom from all elaborations, coalesence, purity and equality =>> the spontaneous presence and natural perfection (言语道断) .
[2:12 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oh yeah was about to say about the presence part lol
[2:13 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..

Jayson MPaul

Soh Wei Yu
I'm interested in these phases: freedom from elaborations, coalesence, purity and equality. Do you have anything written on them that explains what they are?
Soh Wei Yu
Author

Jayson MPaul

No these are mipham’s teachings. It is in the book John tan asked me to read:
https://www.amazon.com/.../dp/0861711572/ref=mp_s_a_1_1...
I think it will be good for you to read too

▫ Jayson MPaul

Soh Wei Yu
excellent. I will start reading

~ *Weather metaphor*

There is no weather actively creating, as an independent agent, the activities of clouds, rain, sun, wind, etc. Weather is a designation conceptually established upon a multiplicity of events/activities which are seamlessly interconnected, dynamic, and conditionally-arisen.

It is important to realize these metaphors directly, as the empty nature of Awareness/Mind in one’s direct experience and not remain as an intellectual concept or ideation.

2010, John Tan:

I did not tell you that pure aggregates is awareness, that is non-dual. When you understand anatta, you realize awareness is like weather, it is a label to denote this luminous yet empty arising, that is pure aggregates.

2013 conversation with John Tan:

John Tan: When you say "weather", does weather exist?

Soh Wei Yu: No. It's a convention imputed on a seamless activity. Existence and non existence don't apply.

John Tan: What is the basis where this label rely on?

Soh Wei Yu: Rain clouds wind etc

John Tan: Don't talk prasanga. Directly see. Rain too is a label. But in direct experience, there is no issue but when probed, you realized how one is confused about the reification from language. And from there life/death/creation/cessation arise. And whole lots of attachment. But it does not mean there is no basis...get it?

Soh Wei Yu: The basis is just the experience right?

John Tan: Yes which is plain and simple. When we say the weather is windy. Feel the wind, the blowing... But when we look at language and mistaken verb for nouns there are big issues. So before we talk about this and that. Understand what consciousness is and awareness is. Get it? When we say weather, feel the sunshine, the wind, the rain. You do not search for weather. Get it? Similarly, when we say awareness, look into scenery, sound, tactile sensations, scents and thoughts”.

(Note that this is still understanding emptiness from the perspective of firstfold emptiness, in secondfold emptiness there is nothing to ground conventions on - to be elaborated in the chapter on Stage 6).

“24 Jun `06, 1:37PM
Thusness
Cog
The weather as Pristine Awareness
Look! The formation of the cloud, the rain, the color of the sky, the thunder, all these entirety that is taking place, what is it? It is Pristine Awareness. Not identify with anything, not bounded within the body, free from defintion and experience what is it. It is the entire field of our pristine awareness taking place with its emptiness nature.
If we fall back to 'Self', we are enclosed within. First we must go beyond symbols and see behind the essence that takes place. Master this art until the factor of enlightenment arises and stablizes, the 'self' subsides and the ground reality without core is understood. 😊” – John Tan, 2006

A Conversation with Someone who Realized Anatta

Throughout the years, I have encountered many who have realised anatta after encountering AtR materials. Here is an example of a conversation with someone who realised anatta after many years in the I AM phase. The following conversation took place in Dharma Overground back in 2011:

Seraph Tai:

I was reading the text on integral psychotherapy and transpersonal identity development, and while reading the notions about the Nondual, it happened.
Those notions are worth mentioning, I think:
in Kashmir Shivaism, they outline ancient guidelines about obstacles to ultimate reality, so called malas (impurities):

- anava mala (belief that any given person occupies particular space, i.e. I am here not there, and certainly not everywhere)
- mayiya mala (belief that there are other objects outside of us, i.e. Jane is out there, not here where I am located)
Basically that is the root perception of false ego, the illusory center of reference.

By that time, Nondual was already here (only seeing the seen, hearing the sound etc...), it seems the first two malas were recognized as false straight away.

It is important to note that I was at that point able to switch back to "I am" presence, perceiving the well known Omnipresence of my True self. For years I entered this state at will, hence falling back to the "I am" presence was happening, I guess.

It was different this time, however: I realized with the so called aha! moment, that the I am presence is exactly the same as the "sensory input" I was experiencing. The seen, sensed, cognized AS the "I am" presence - only that "I am" presence was not there anymore. I was however, able to switch, back and forth, so to speak. Maybe it is worth mentioning that the Nondual was/is (still is) more liberating and peaceful than "I am" presence insight.

What sealed the deal, so to speak LOL, was:
- karma mala - belief that a person must perform an action, do something to remedy any given situation, say "I need to meditate to get enlightened"
It happened few moments after I read that notion, and everything just became crystal clear, no switching back to "I am" presence, there was no one here, there, anywhere to switch to!! And I am not talking only about the little false ego, I am also talking about the ultimate "I am" presence! For years, I was happy to abide as a Witness, Omnipresent and liberated, free from mental/emotional/physical bullshit.

But now, the "I am" presence was gone!! Even the so called Unmanifested "I am" was nowhere to be found (the Causal level has two sub-levels, lower (I am presence, the Witness) and higher (No "I am", just the Unmanifested, latent absolute potential), according to Wilber).

It seems that after years of entering satori at will, I was allowed to move on.
Only there isn't anyone to give the permission, or anyone to be allowed to move on. No one is here, it never was, it can not exist, because events are unfolding by their own, on their own. Phenomena is free, separated from every other phenomena, not touching but liberating as they come and go.

I can enter into Nondual at will now, especially after the shared experience. Driving the car, eating, looking out the window - it seems that these situations are easy and do not require much mental effort on my part, so I can easily let go. What I also notice now is that I can discern the Advaita texts from the Nondual ones.

To my saddness, I realized that my favorite master, Sri Ramana Maharshi, is not speaking about Anatta, or not even about Nondual (as far as I can see), He mentions that even in Sahaja Nirbikalpa Samadhi (the ultimate state, according

to Him) there is "something" there which mediator is at One with. Well, He must be talking about something different, not about Anatta or Nondual.

Anatta I can enter almost at will now, but it usually just slips back to the Nondual insight, with slight resemblance of something here, traces or tendencies from years of "I am" presence samadhis, I guess.

"An Eternal Now (Soh):
What is your view about what consciousness is now? Does consciousness have any characteristics of being unchanging, independent or etc and if not what is it?"

Well, now I view consciousness as non-local, not centered in the "I am presence" anymore, there is no split between samadhi and everyday life, in a sense that there is no one to make that distinction. I am more at peace now, more at ease, laid back so to speak.

Yes, at the moment, I see the consciousness as something free, liberating in itself, "changing" by itself: events come and go by themselves, no one is in control, so to speak, no one to instigate coming and going, not even God.
And, I promise you, for me this notion (there is no God, as a separate entity or Absolute Self etc...)is rather dramatic change.

I am still not clear why events or phenomena are perceived as coming and going. What is condition ("yuan" as per Thusness) for events to occur? What is yuan?

"An Eternal Now (Soh):

How stable is your non dual experiencing now? Also I presume you have read Thusness's articles in our blog? One more thing: any changes in your sleep and dream?"

I have read most of Thusness' articles at your blog, yes. But I don't get everything yet, especially about the Sunyata insights.

How stable is my Nondual experiencing now? I don't know what is the criteria for stability, but I can enter Nondual at will, it is easiest to do, as there is no effort needed (apart from letting go) or something gained. When everything is let go of, the Nondual remains, not as a state or level, but as base reality. No need to do anything, as it already and alone is.
All of this, it is not spontaneous yet, though.

It is interesting you should mention sleep (dreamless one, I suppose) and dreams.

Lucid dreaming is an important part of my sadhana, I have been dreaming lucidly (on and off) for years.

The change I am noticing for a few years is that all three states (waking, dreams and dreamless sleep) are happening to Me, the base Reality, they are happening in Me, so to speak (actually, everything else, everything, is happening in Me, as a part of my Being). Even in dreaming I am aware of this, not as in classic lucid dreaming sense but more profound. It is like common denominator, silver lining in all three states, so to speak.
Does that make any sense, pls?

But now even this has changed as I know beyond the shadow of the doubt that there is no Me as the base reality.
It is a process, I think, so I look forward to experiencing new insights.

Thank you.
s.

Soh Wei Yu replied:

Good insights there Seraphis! You seem able to actualize the living experience of anatta without dwelling much into view. Your insights unfold from recognizing "the same taste" of I AM in all six entries and exits, into seeing that the very idea of abiding is a hindrance, to the doubtless realization that there never was a "This I" to abide in, and whatever arises is already free and liberating.

There are similarities with my experience but somewhat different triggers. I had an intense non-dual experience (Aug '10) when dancing at a nightclub that totally dissolved the Witness for a few days (after which I was switching between I AM and non-dual for a period of time due to previous practice tendencies like you until clearer insights), before this event non-dual glimpses was occassional, few, short and intermittent but after this event I was able to 'switch' into non-dual mode with relative ease as my insight into Awareness/Existence was refined from "I AM pure Existence" to "Existence is the very stuff of whatever arises". Soon I was also contemplating and challenging the sense of subject-object, inside-outside, border and boundaries of awareness and manifestation, etc until it was all seen as seamless awareness (one mind). Then non-dual was pretty clear to me. Later during October 2010 I wrote two articles in reference to my insights, first on One Taste and then it was contemplating on the Bahiya Sutta about a week later that triggered the clear insight into anatta/"No I": http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2010/10/one-taste.html and https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/10/my-commentary-on-bahiya-sutta.html .

For now, you should not be distracted with stages of insights (sunyata or whatever) but be thorough and leave no trace of "I" for the willingness to let go completely (the I) has arisen. Check this out if you haven't: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/11/where-there-is-no-cold-or-heat_27.html

(Nov 27 Where There Is No Cold or Heat

A monk asked Tozan, “When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?”
Tozan said, “Why don’t you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?”
The monk said, “What is the place where there is no cold or heat?”
Tozan said, “When it’s cold, the cold kills you; when it’s hot, the heat kills you.”

This is not advice to “accept” your situation, as some commentators have suggested, but a direct expression of authentic practice and enlightenment. Master Tozan is not saying, “When cold, shiver; when hot, sweat,” nor is he saying, “When cold, put on a sweater; when hot, use a fan.” In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe. The heat kills you, and there is only heat in the whole universe. The fragrance of incense kills you, and there is only the fragrance of incense in the whole universe. The sound of the bell kills you, and there is only “boooong” in the whole universe...

~*The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing, Ted Biringer*

Soh: Also see, The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space, water)

Next step is not to stagnate in no-self and engage wholly and completely into actions and activities then "satori" has no entry or exit; when the thunder claps, the whole of "satori" is actualized!

Nafis Rahman's Breakthrough to Anatta

Nafis Rahman wrote:

Not sure what stage this is, just sharing from personal experience. Will try to be as clear as possible.
For the past 2 months, I focused mainly on somatic techniques due to having an energy imbalance. Very limited contemplation or formal meditation.
When I walk, there is just the sensation of my feet touching the hard floor. When hearing a song on Youtube, it’s just hearing the sound itself without any kind of internal interference. Sometimes I even re-develop an energy imbalance while listening to music. There’s no need for a “hearer” to hear for me, but it’s actually happening in real-time rather than merely theoretically.
Any concept of anything absolute or unchanging no longer exists. I used to believe in God, but it disappeared as well. There’s no need for a separate awareness, and through practicing the exercises in Seeing that Frees and Clarifying the Natural State I know firsthand that the self never existed in the first place. It was all a self-deception.
I’ve had no-mind experiences in the past, but since it’s been stable for over 1 month, I think the insight has fully developed. However I still have thoughts, emotions, and get absent-minded. The world around me still feels very much physical. After practicing some of the emptiness exercises, I have weird visions and hallucinations, like objects have no boundary surrounding it. But still working on it, so ignore this section.
Sometimes the world seems “flat” like everything is 2D or a painting, but again, I’m not confident in anything beyond anatta. Or that the colors of each object start mixing together like a wet painting.
I feel like I can make everyday experience even more direct, that the directness of how everything is perceived can be increased. However when I do so, I experience pressure around my third eye. If I try to delve into sensations even more

it spreads to the crown chakra. Even with anatta I feel there are phases in terms of how directly everything is perceived by the 5 senses. But again, it’s difficult to go further at present.

Soh told John Tan:

[12:39 PM, 10/7/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I asked him to read clarifying the natural state two months ago (Further comments by Soh: not the first time I heard of someone attaining insights just by reading through this book, so this is recommended reading, along with The Royal Seal of Mahamudra: Volume One: A Guidebook for the Realization of Coemergence: 1. And as I told Nafis, if you are interested in Mahamudra or Dzogchen, find a good teacher in these lineages.)
[12:39 PM, 10/7/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Back then he hasn't realised anatta. Only no mind

John Tan replied:

[12:40 PM, 10/7/2020] John Tan: Like I said yesterday, even anatta there are several phases.
[12:41 PM, 10/7/2020] John Tan: Anatta as in the experiential insight of seeing through self and seeing through the cause for the sense of self is different.
[12:48 PM, 10/7/2020] John Tan: The later path one towards emptiness realizing "inherency" is the result of a reification. One then progress through deconstructing the reification thoroughly and gain the prajna (wisdom) that not only sees through directly the mental constructs and conventionalities but also the direct knowledge of one's empty clarity.
[1:01 PM, 10/7/2020] John Tan: Don't rush post anatta or even no-mind but refine one's view. Nevertheless it is hard not to get energy imbalances initially which is due attachment of going after certain experiences.

The sense of self/Self or any sense of it-ness is a hindrance for natural spontaneity and therefore thorough exhaustion is necessary. However maturing this emptiness of "it-ness or self-ness" post anatta is an ongoing process. Deeply held blindspots are slippery and extremely difficult to see and can take decades to reveal.

So practice calmly and evenly...don't rush into anything...

Just relax and be fully open to whatever arises without dual, don't go after anything and keep refining view instead of chasing after experiences. Eventually the clarity of seeing through will automatically result in the everyday experiences.
[1:13 PM, 10/7/2020] John Tan: Without dual and without self

Nafis Rahman wrote:

Thanks! Yeah John Tan is completely right, I was too busy chasing after the experience itself rather than focusing on view. Right now I'm focused on gently deconstructing emptiness and dependent origination. Should I focus on theoretical books instead or continue with this current practice?

John Tan replied:

[1:18 PM, 10/7/2020] John Tan: Just continue with current practice. Allow the whole body mind to become a sensing organ, vibrantly alive and intimately connected with the ten thousand things!

Nafis Rahman wrote to someone else:

Totally Random thoughts, not sure it will be that helpful...

I had experiences of anatta (just sound, touch, smell) in the past that lasted over 3 days, and thought this was it! But the sense of self always came back although significantly weakened, and there was a subtle clinging to God or some kind of cosmic force.
Personally, I had to approach the self from multiple angles, really explore how it manifested in the mind in relation to the Thusness stanzas and everyday experience. For example, when hearing sound, why is there a necessity for a hearer to hear for me, rather than just hearing directly? Why go through this unnecessary loop of “hearer is hearing a sound”? Even for thinking, why should this separate thinker think for me? Thoughts are still happening regardless, better to just kick this thinker out of my head!
Going through the ebook from I Am all the way to Anatta (don’t touch stage 6) really helped in terms of view. Especially the difference between one-mind, no-mind, or void in terms of direct experience. The book Crystal Clear by Thrangu Rinpoche really provided the tools and the trigger to just smash this self into pieces until you realize you’re just hitting empty air. But it’s not immediately obvious, so some patience is necessary. Especially being radically honest with oneself about one’s insights and experience. Always remain self-critical. I probably spent 2 weeks after the “realization” just reading Advaita books to challenge this breakthrough as much as possible.
This is an article by Soh that I found helpful: Different Degress of No-Self: Non-Doership, Non-dual, Anatta, Total Exertion and Dealing with Pitfalls (I kept on clinging to non-doership in earlier phases)

Anatta and the Emptiness of Awareness is Not a Denial of Awareness/Clarity

Although Awareness is seen to not seen to exist in and of its own (its nature is empty), it is not a denial of Awareness/Clarity. See: No Awareness Does Not Mean Non-Existence of Awareness

“Geovani Geo to me, to be without dual is not to subsume into one and although awareness is negated, it is not to say there is nothing.

Negating the Awareness/Presence (Absolute) is not to let Awareness remain at the abstract level. When such transpersonal Awareness that exists only in wonderland is negated, the vivid radiance of presence are fully tasted in the transient appearances; zero gap and zero distance between presence and moment to moment of ordinary experiences and we realize separation has always only been conventional.

Then mundane activities -- hearing, sitting, standing, seeing and sensing, become pristine and vibrant, natural and free.” – John Tan, 2020

“Buddhism does not deny luminous clarity, in fact it is to have total, uncontrived, direct non-referential [experience] of clarity in all moments... therefore no-self apart from manifestation. Otherwise one is only holding ghost images.” - John Tan, 2013

“...dissolve the self in the incredible realness of the phenomenon world... When someone ask zen masters what is buddha's nature.... it’s the tile, rocks... feel the hardness, jumps... it is exactly that. Experience anything... everything...” - John Tan, 2006

“When you present to 不思 *(Soh: a forummer in China)*, you must not deny 觉 (awareness). But emphasize how 覺 (awareness) is effortlessly and marvelously manifests without the slightest sense of referencing and point of centricity and duality and subsuming... be it here, now, in, out... this can only come from realization of anatta, dependent origination and emptiness so that the spontaneity of 相 (appearance) is realized to one's radiance clarity.” - John Tan, 2014

[12:42 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: This pristine, clean, transparent quality is always there, otherwise there is no cognition nor manifestation. When there is no conceptual thoughts, it is obvious...when covered with mental thoughts, it is not that obvious but all manifestations are pervaded with this taste...
[12:43 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[12:43 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: It is be quite obvious to you...
[12:43 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: yeah
[12:44 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: In fact, it should already pervade your entire body mind.
[12:44 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Otherwise you wouldnt understand and feel like a ball of radiance light...
[12:46 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Whether hearing sound, seeing colors, tasting or feeling sensations, this luminous radiance is always there as presence.
[12:47 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Like now you are hearing sound, there is that quality...
[12:48 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah..
[12:49 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: In anatta, since all 6 senses become transparent and pure, entire body-mind becomes transparent and pristine...
[12:57 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: So one should not separate this transparent, pristine quality as if it is something separate from manifestation. The radiance is naturally pristine and crystal, no polishing needed. Nor can one distance from it.

“The Transient Universe has a Heart

Dogen on the Heart of Tiles:

If we belittle tiles as being lumps of clay, we will also belittle people as being lumps of clay. If people have a Heart, then tiles too will have a Heart.
Shobogenzo, Kokyo, Hubert Nearman

I mentioned earlier that I will write something about dull nondual experience and realising the Presence or the Heart.

There is something tremendously alive, intelligent, a quality of pure Presence and that is nothing inert but intensely luminous (not in the sutric definition of purity and emptiness) but in the sense that the intensity of our cognizant mind evokes the sense of powerful radiance and illumination but without any separation between an illuminator and the illuminated, with absolutely no agent/perceiver/doer involved. It can evoke the sense of a radiance that is so intense that it completely outshines all visual darkness of night and brightness of the sun. This Presence is mystically alive, wondrous and magnificent, “more real than real”, and the complete opposite of an inert or merely some dull state of non conceptuality and absorption.

This outshining of Presence-Awareness is not about some hidden invisible background existing behind manifestation (although it will be perceived this way at the I AM stage) but is vividly manifest or “Presencing” (Presencing is a better word than Presence as it is not a static background or entity and none other than the dynamic stuff of transience) as the very “realness” or “vividness” of any appearance/display, color, sound, scent, touch, taste, thought, as if everything comes alive and there is something very wonderful and beautiful about it. The brilliant light of Presence-Awareness is none other than the body-mind-universe which when deconstructed and freed from self/Self/physicality is experienced as spheres of vivid light, colors, sounds, and sensations.

This luminosity is also not merely a heightened state of clarity as I explained:

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../luminosity-vs-clar...

“Someone asked me about luminosity. I said it is not simply a state of heightened clarity or mindfulness, but like touching the very heart of your being, your reality, your very essence without a shadow of doubt. It is a radiant, shining core of Presence-Awareness, or Existence itself. It is the More Real than Real. It can be from a question of "Who am I?" followed by a sudden realization. And then with further insights you touch the very life, the very heart, of everything. Everything comes alive. First as the innermost 'You', then later when the centerpoint is dropped (seen through -- there is no 'The Center') every 'point' is equally so, every point is A 'center', in every encounter, form, sound and activity.”

“[3/8/19, 5:06:41 PM] John Tan: Yes. That (More real than real) is also an insight that turns the mind internal. That (More real than real) comes with I AMness. The difference between anatta and substantiality is [that] beside appearance, there is [an] innate feeling of some essence separate from the appearances of colors, sensations, sound, smell, taste and thoughts. Therefore one cannot be fully open and release.”

There is a wide variety of methods to bring oneself to an abrupt stoppage of concepts and a face to face encounter of Pure Presence. All sorts of ways actually, some are safer and some are a bit more risky. For example John (John Tan), I, Ramana Maharshi, Ch'an Master Hsu Yun and many others have awakened through self-enquiry and we are exponents of the method of self-enquiry. Sim Pern Chong awakened to the I AM through breath meditation. Some get awakened through a mere pointing out by a teacher. Some awakened through yogic, tantric, kundalini paths. Some have realised it spontaneously with no prior spiritual practices in a near death experience (see the books and cases of Anita Moorjani and Maren Springsteen). Ram Dass, David Carse and others have had their initial realization of the Heart-essence through the use of psychedelic drugs like magic mushrooms, ayahuasca, 5-MeO-DMT, LSD, and so on. (I am not advocating the use of drugs here as they come with legality issues and some risks, just stating that some people have used them with such results. Personally, all my major realisations and breakthroughs happened sober during meditative contemplation. For more details on psychedelics, refer to Psychedelics and Buddhist Practice?) There are many other methods and koans I did not mention.

And yet, many have awakened through a simple shout by a Zen Master or a Dzogchen Master. A sudden unexpected KATZ! or a PHAT! of a Zen and Dzogchen master brings one into the immediate thoughtless face-to-face encounter of the luminous heart-essence. At that moment, you just shift out from all that nonsense and garbage in your head into just that instance of being blanked out into Presence. It is not an inert trance but an alert, alive and yet thoughtless state of Presence. Try it!

But whatever method one uses to introduce that initial glimpse and taste of Presence, it is always through the deepening of insight into non-dual anatta that brings that taste to effortless uncontrivance and full-blown maturity in all encounters and manifestations.

So when one has access to a state of nondual, one should ask whether it is dull and inert or suffused with a powerful sense of Presence. After anatta this Presence is no longer seen as a background but vividly shining forth as the manifold dynamic and seamlessly interconnected display, and the play of dharma and dependent origination is something which is alive, not just inert and mechanistic as someone wrote. All the qualities of I AM - infinite like space, powerful Presence, Luminosity, Clarity, Vitality and Intelligence are effortlessly experienced without contrivance, and furthermore no longer seen as something hidden behind but fully manifested from moment to moment activity and the sense of cosmic Impersonality which was once experienced as being lived through a reified cosmic intelligence is now experienced as the total exertion where a single activity is the exertion of the Whole - an activity that is seamlessly connected and coordinated with the entire Whole, a spontaneous exertion of the Whole of seamless dependencies. In other words all the taste of Presence similar to the I AM, including all the four aspects of I AM and the experience of anatta as requisites are fully present in the experience of Maha suchness in each single manifest experience even as simple and ordinary as a breath, and Maha suchness is an experience of greatness beyond measure, such that a single breath, a single step forward while walking feels cosmic and limitless.

"The purpose of anatta is to have full blown experience of the heart -- boundlessly, completely, non-dually and non-locally. Re-read what I wrote to Mr. J.

In every situations, in all conditions, in all events. It is to eliminate unnecessary contrivity so that our essence can be expressed without obscuration.

Mr. J wants to point to the heart but is unable to express in a non-dual way... for in duality, the essence cannot be realized. All dualistic interpretation are mind made. You know the smile of Mahākāśyapa? Can you touch the heart of that smile even 2500 yrs later?

One must lose all mind and body by feeling with entire mind and body this essence which is 心 (Mind). Yet 心 (Mind) too is 不可得 (ungraspable/unobtainable).. The purpose is not to deny 心 (Mind) but rather not to place any limitations or duality so that 心 (Mind) can fully manifest.

Therefore without understanding 缘 (conditions)， is to limit 心 (Mind). without understanding 缘 (conditions)， is to place limitation in its manifestations. You must fully experience 心 (Mind) by realizing 无心 (No-Mind) and fully embrace the wisdom of 不可得 (ungraspable/unobtainable)." - John Tan, 2014” - Soh, 2019

“I do not generally advise on psychedelic use (I do not tell people they should or should not do it - it must come from their own discernment of its pros and cons, risks and benefits, personal appetite for risk taking and adventurousness, legality issues pertaining to where the person lives, etc). But generally those who have gone through anatta and maturing of anatta report that psychedelic experiences pale in comparison. The experience of anatta luminosity and total exertion can be so intense that by focusing in a wrong way, one can end up with energy issues, so one must thread with care (imagine a 24/7 psychedelic trip that never ends although you weren't on any drugs, you can't sleep, headaches, etc - that happened to me for about a week until I resolved it).

My own report: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../the-magical...

AF Richard's report:

RICHARD: To illustrate what a life of total fulfilment and utter satisfaction looks like I will quote from a book by one of the three ‘positive psychologists’ you refer to:

• ‘One summer day, 40 years ago or so, I was walking along a residential street when an rich, earthy scent wafted my way and triggered, as smells are wont to do, a vivid recollection. Like Dorothy, stepping out of her front door into the Technicolor Land of Oz, I remembered another summer’s day when I was 4 years old, playing in a bank of warm, black dirt in the back yard of my home. I had a little red toy car for which I’d made a road slanting up the face of the dirt bank and, in my recollection, I was ‘driving’ the car up this mountain road while making motor noises. That’s all there was, no real action, yet the memory, in the few seconds before it faded away, was redolent with the smell and feel of the

warm dirt, the bright colour of the toy, the hot sun – with simple but intensely pleasurable sensory experience. When I read Aldous Huxley’s account of his mescaline experience, of his feeling that the colours, shapes, and textures of his books on the shelves across the room were as intense an experience as he could bear and that he dared not look outside at the flowers in the garden, I thought of my brief revisitation of my childhood. Presumably this intensity of sensory experience does fade, when it’s work of facilitating perceptual learning is accomplished, because it would be maladaptive in adults. Those ancients who sat around all day entranced by colours, smells, and textures, would have never gotten the venison cooked nor the berries picked; they would have been easy meat for prowling tigers and unlikely to become ancestors’. (Chapter 1, ‘Happiness: The Nature and Nurture of Joy and Contentment’; David Lykken). (http://www.psych.umn.edu/.../Lykken/HapChap%201.htm...).

In short: life here in this actual world *is* such an intense experience, each moment again, as the intense experience he describes (a PCE lasting a few seconds 40 years ago) yet despite his well-explained (referencing Mr. Aldous Huxley’s account) glimpse of the perfection of the purity of this actual world (as experienced when 4 years old) he opts instead for the ‘life satisfaction’ of positive psychology ... all the while presuming, with spurious justifications, that this life I am living is ‘maladaptive in adults’.
Yet I am neither in gaol nor a psychiatric institution; I can orient myself in space and time and get from point A to point B; I am not easy meat for prowlers; I feed, clothe and house myself, paying all my bills on time; I manage four net-worked computers, an internet domain, a web page, a mail server, and so on, without any prior experience or training; I write millions of words meaningfully strung together in sentences and paragraphs ... all the while ‘entranced by colours, smells, and textures’ to an extent much, much more than a PCE allows (as evidenced by Mr. Aldous Huxley not being able to bear it for example).
Need I say more about what the value of his ‘80% of Americans report ...’ survey is worth?
*” – Soh, 2021

"I was actually just thinking about this the other day. My current moment to moment experience has been of intense clarity, very much like when I have used psychedelics in the past. It is more ordered however. There was always a sort of non-natural feel to the psychedelic experiences. This feels totally natural. As for where it seems looking is coming from, that changes all the time. There is no specific center. Sometimes it feels like looking out the eyes for a moment, then it will change the next moment to being aware of the whole scene, then switch to being aware of some mental image overlaid on the whole scene universe. Sometimes it feels like existing in a more than 3-dimensional way. As I release more and more into the non-dual, dependently originated, lack of mind, total exertion view of reality, new experiences open up that I wouldn't have even dreamed were possible. These experiences are certainly not the point or at all a refuge like I used to want them to be. If I try to hold onto them at all I squash them. I mostly try to just study them gently and refine my view to release more into anatta/total exertion. If I had taken a drug that pushed my experience into what I have naturally today, I would have likely been overwhelmed. There was too much grasping then to really go with it." - Jayson MPaul, 2021

“Session Start: Saturday, 27 March, 2010

(9:54 PM) Thusness: Not bad for self-enquiry
(9:55 PM) AEN: icic.. btw what do you think lucky and chandrakirti is trying to convey
(9:56 PM) Thusness: those quotes weren't really well translated in my opinion. what needs be understood is 'No I' is not to deny Witnessing consciousness. and 'No Phenomena' is not to deny Phenomena. It is just for the purpose of 'de-constructing' the mental constructs.
(10:00 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:01 PM) Thusness: when you hear sound, you cannot deny it...can you?
(10:01 PM) AEN: ya
(10:01 PM) Thusness: so what are you denying? when you experience the Witness as you described in your thread 'certainty of being', how can you deny this realization? so what is does 'no I' and 'no phenomena' mean?
(10:03 PM) AEN: like you said its only mental constructs that are false... but consciousness cant be denied ?
(10:03 PM) Thusness: no...i am not saying that. Buddha never deny the aggregates, just the selfhood. the problem is what is meant by 'non-inherent', empty nature, of phenomena and 'I'

2010:

(11:15 PM) Thusness: but understanding it wrongly is another matter can you deny Witnessing? are you deny that certainty of being?
(11:16 PM) AEN: no
(11:16 PM) Thusness: then there is nothing wrong with it. how could you deny your very own existence? how could you deny existence at all? there is nothing wrong experiencing directly without intermediary the pure sense of existence. after this direct experience, you should refine your understanding, your view, your insights. not after the experience, deviate from the right view, re-enforce your wrong view. you do not deny the witness, you refine your insight of it
what is meant by non-dual
(11:19 PM) Thusness: what is meant by non-conceptual
what is being spontaneous
what is the 'impersonality' aspect
(11:20 PM) Thusness: what is luminosity. you never experience anything unchanging. in later phase, when you experience non-dual, there is still this tendency to focus on a background... and that will prevent your progress into the direct insight into the TATA as described in the tata article. and there are still different degree of intensity even you realized to that level.
(11:23 PM) AEN: non dual?
(11:23 PM) Thusness: tada (an article) is more than non-dual...it is phase 5-7. it is all about the integration of the insight of anatta and emptiness. vividness into transience, feeling what i called 'the texture and fabric' of Awareness as forms is very important, then come emptiness. the integration of luminosity and emptiness
(Soh: Also see, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/12/zen-master-ven-jinmyo-renge-senseis.html (compilation of WWZC’s articles))

(10:45 PM) Thusness: do not deny that Witnessing but refine the view, that is very important. so far, you have correctly emphasized the importance of witnessing. unlike in the past, you gave people the impression that you are denying this witnessing presence. you merely deny the personification, reification and objectification so that you can progress further and realize our empty nature.
but don't always post what i told you in msn. In no time, i will become sort of cult leader
(10:48 PM) AEN: oic.. lol
(10:49 PM) Thusness: anatta is no ordinary insight. When we can reach the level of thorough transparency, you will realize the benefits. non-conceptuality, clarity, luminosity, transparency, openness, spaciousness, thoughtlessness, non-locality...all these descriptions become quite meaningless.” - Excerpts from: No Awareness Does Not Mean Non-Existence of Awareness

[3:53 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: The background is empty like rabbit horns but the foreground is free from extremes like reflection. Is that right
[3:57 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: To me all are like an occurence
[4:13 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Hmm but the background to me is totally an illusion has never arisen for the past 8 years.. like once seen through it never arises. is a bit different, its clearly appearing just whether its non arisen nature is seen
[4:13 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: That is why you have to integrate. There is this issue
[4:13 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: To you, background is non-existence
[4:14 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: And foreground is appearance like reflection
[4:15 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Even if i access I AM now it is seen as foreground, not background
[4:15 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: Yes
[4:15 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Therefore is an occurrence
[4:16 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: If background is seen as foreground, then where is the difference?
[4:16 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: The difference is like sound, color, thoughts and tastes
[4:18 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Background seen as foreground means I AM seen as foreground right? Its just a sense of existence in the thought realm, so the difference is simply in the differing mode of appearing like you said sound, color, etc
[4:19 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: Yes
[4:19 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: So the difference is like sound and colors, thoughts and sensations.
[4:21 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: So do you know the way of "non-inherence"?
[4:23 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Just spontaneous opening and springing forth of occurrence without reifying subject, object or arising
[4:24 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: You must understand what is meant by inherent way and what is not...
[4:51 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Inherent way is like seeking and grasping
[4:51 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Such as abiding in an ultimate or Self
[4:51 PM, 12/31/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Non inherent way is spontaneous opening and releasing all grasping
[5:00 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: Don't just look at releasing of grasping...look at the creative living expression...
[5:02 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: But first clearly understand and taste clarity/appearance without any distortion..

“What Malcolm [is] trying to convey about the inexpressibity is the unconditioned, creative, intelligence aspect beyond expression of conventions. The advaita abstract this into an absolute beyond relative whereas anatta insight brings us back right to the relative and directly realised the relative is exactly where this so called inexpressible clean purity is. Therefore it is naturally and effortlessly non-dual.” – John Tan, 2021

Anatta is often misunderstood as mere non-doership, impersonality and subject-object non-division (wrong self-diagnosis!)

“Unless there is expression of non dual, otherwise yes more like impersonality and non-doership *[than anatta].”* – John Tan, 2019

“Nothing much, his no-self is more towards no doership rather then pellucid luminosity.” – John Tan mentioned about someone’s experience, 2020

“[11:24 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: Like in prasangika mmk, the non-affirming negation, in the phases of insights approach of the 2 stanzas, one is not interested in the affirmation, just the thorough deconstruction of self construct. The seeing through of self in anatta is the direct experiential taste of non-dual, purity and spontaneity.
[11:39 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: So when someone describe to you, they say they have deconstruct self/Self but there is no direct taste of colors, smell, sensation, sound, no direct face to face of the radiance, pellucidity, purity, spontaneity, insubstantiality and non-duality of appearances, is that genuine authentication?
[12:00 AM, 5/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: No its not.. more like impersonality
[12:00 AM, 5/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Or nondoership””
“[11:33 AM, 6/9/2021] Soh Wei Yu: She asked what do you think
[11:35 AM, 6/9/2021] John Tan: Later then I read
[8:39 PM, 6/9/2021] John Tan: Yes more on no-doership.
[8:40 PM, 6/9/2021] John Tan: 1. Dzogchen has a phrase "spontaneous presence". I do not know it's exact meaning in dzogchen however the phrase is intimately related to the 2 experiences of the [John Tan’s] 2 stanzas [of anatta]:

1. No doership = spontaneous
2. Mere appearances as Presence

Imo, she is more on 1 not so much on 2 so far in her descriptions.
[8:43 PM, 6/9/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah I thought so”

2006:

“(1:19 AM) John: it is very difficult to stabilize the no-self stage.

(1:19 AM) John: haahahha....it can take many many years.
(1:19 AM) AEN: oic..
(1:20 AM) John: depending on longchen [Sim Pern Chong] conditions, i hope he can go through 2 more break-through to stabilize a lil.
(1:20 AM) AEN: 2 more break through?
(1:20 AM) AEN: icic
(1:21 AM) John: u think initial break-through means that's all....kok your head
(1:21 AM) AEN: haha no la
(1:21 AM) John: still need some time.
(1:21 AM) AEN: icic
(1:22 AM) John: the realness and vividness of the phenomenal world and self-arising (self-so) is very important. (comments by Soh: realness and vividness related to second anatta stanza, self-arising related to first stanza) he almost need to break the layer of 'thinking mechanism' completely to see it. now he will still have a hard time fighting with this habitual tendency
(1:23 AM) AEN: oic..
(1:23 AM) John: the subtle imprints of the labels and names will confuse him. That is why i told you to post at his site. hope it can sink into his consciousness. only the realness and self-arising can break-lose this layer....it is quite tough....and will suffer a lil.”

“Unmanifested is the manifestation,
The no-thing of everything,
Completely still yet ever flowing,
This is the spontaneous arising nature of the source.
Simply Self-So.
Use self-so to overcome conceptualization.
Dwell completely into the incredible realness of the phenomenal world.” – John Tan, 2006

Many people mistakenly think that they have realized Stage 5 but in fact they have not. This is because there are many faces of self/Self. Note the big letter and small letter distinctions of self/Self. In Phase 5, not only is the sense of ‘small ego’ or ‘sense of individuality’ dissolved, even the sense of being a metaphysical Self, an ultimate, changeless, transcendental Subject is being seen through, dissolved and made irrelevant through insight, even though the Presence/Presencing and unfabricated Clarity is not denied but ‘made’ total, uncontrived, direct and non-referential (as mentioned in the previous section).

Relinquishing one aspect self does not mean other aspects of self/Self has been dissolved. Stage 5 is the thorough dissolution of the many faces of self/Self through deep experiential insight. Someone may experience non-doership and think it is the same as the Stage 5 realization of anatta, but in fact it isn’t. Some people may experience impersonality (see: four aspects of I AM above)... non-dual (as in stage 4)... and think of it as anatta. But it isn’t the same.

“Phase 5 is quite thorough in being no one and I would call this anatta in all 3 aspects -- no subject/object division, no doer-ship and absence of agent.”

~ John Tan, 2009

All phenomena happening by itself spontaneously and causally (via dependent origination) on its own, without the sense of doership or control, is not what I call anatta realization. This is so even if one has the experience of impersonality, being lived by the divine or cosmic life and intelligence as a divine happening. You can trigger an insight or experience into non-doership by asking yourself: do you know what your next moment of thought or experience is, or does it just happen? Then by observing your experience, you see that all thoughts and experience just happens spontaneously on its own accord, unbidden.

If you are still unsure of non-doership, read this article by Greg Goode: https://www.nonduality.com/goode.htm

In the case of mere non-doership and impersonality, the subject/object paradigm is still present, and although one feels that phenomena happens on its own, the sense of being an observer watching things happening on its own is still present. This is not what I call the realization of anatta, in fact it is not even non-dual realization yet.

Many people that I’ve seen, including those who went through no-self contemplations of Liberation Unleashed, are talking about an experience of non-doership. They have not reached non-dual realization yet. And because they have not realized Presence, their next phase of progression became self-enquiry and I AM realization. This is a valid progression, but not to mistake that as the ultimate or final realization. The I AM must later be brought to the foreground and anatta (as defined in this guide) should be realized by seeing through the reified background.

2009:

“(12:54 AM) Thusness: you are also have not clearly experienced non-dual
(12:56 AM) AEN: like ok, if I heard a loud BOOM suddenly I feel fear and my body contract... its dependently originated and theres no doer. is that what you mean?
(8:07 AM) Thusness: No. you must clearly understand what is meant by no doer. it is really this witness you are talking about without the tendency of reifying anything. Experientially there is a difference between subtle referencing back to a source and just simply allowing whatever to arise as it is whenever condition is. Always remember there is no denying of luminous clarity but understand whatever arises dependently originates.”

2009:

“(2:21 PM) Thusness: John wheeler realized certain aspect of no-self. Not anatta but close to phase 4. The sense of dualism is still there. Because [of that] he will not be able to integrate the transient. He can however realize he is lived by a greater life

(2:24 PM) AEN:
icic.. is that what you mean by feeling God
(2:24 PM) Thusness:
All manifestations is the doing of this One life
(2:24 PM) AEN:
Oic.. eckhart tolle said "Many expressions that are in common usage, and sometimes the structure of language itself, reveal the fact that people don't know who they are. You say: "He lost his life" or "my life," as if life were something that you can possess or lose. The truth is: you don't have a life, you are life. The One Life, the one consciousness that pervades the entire universe and takes temporary form to experience itself as a stone or blade of grass, as an animal, a person, a star or a galaxy.

Can you sense deep within that you already know that? Can you sense that you already are That?"
(2:25 PM) Thusness: This One Life is same to you as well as me. This is a very subtle extrapolation. But experientially it does appears so. It has a lot to do with the spontaneous arising and impersonality (deconstruction of personality). Therefore when one focus and refine the 4 aspects I spoke about without even arising the insight of non-dual, one can still lead to such an experience. This is stage 2. Get it? Further to that one will want to penetrate into 3. Re-read phase one to 3. Phase 4 is strictly non-dual. Though non-dual, still having inherent view. So a practitioner still does not see the truth of the relative. The absolute still seem special. That is One Mind

(2:40 PM) AEN: The "vision" of truth appears new because it was not noticed before. Whatever we are and the world is, is already the fact. There is no attainment involved in being what you are. That is the constant space of life, awareness or being in which all appears. It includes silence and sound, activity and stillness, form and emptiness, knowledge and ignorance, and all other dualities and opposites. Your natural condition is not a state within the appearances but the spacious heart of reality which contains and embraces them all. It is like a bright mirror in which diverse reflections rise and set. The mirror remains as it is and bears no relation to the presence or absence of its reflections. The mirror cannot be limited by or identified with any of the reflections appearing in it, nor does it grasp or resist them. For their part, the reflections have no substance or independent nature apart from the mirror. In the same way, all that is, was or ever will be is contained in the timeless light of your true nature. The strange and wonderful thing is that this has always been so.
If this is not noticed, it gets pointed out and recognized, and the true perspective is restored. It is as simple as that. - john wheeler
this is like One Mind?
(2:47 PM) Thusness: In phase 4, a practitioner will be obsessed with this substratum in a non-dual context. You must understand phase 5-7 is refining the insight of the same experience of 4. You so clearly see that non-dual is implicit as there never is any agent apart from the ongoing phenomenality. Then you realized the true meaning of anatta and emptiness and move from disassociation to self liberation. Seems like talking to different practitioners help you understand the 7 phases but don't make it as an absolute model.”

Found an old post i wrote in my e-journal days after my anatta awakening in 2010 where i distinguished impersonality from anata:

17th October 2010
Originally posted by An Eternal Now:
Update: Oh and regarding 'On the othe hand, feeling ‘universe’ has to do with the deconstruction of ‘identity’ and ‘personality’. You have to have clearer insight of what ‘deconstructions’ leads to what experience.' - it's my experience that dropping personality leads to experiencing Awareness as not an individual or personal presence but a Universal Awareness sustaining and containing all lives and forms... There is a sense of an all pervading Awareness that does not belong to any particular person or object but sustains them. At this point, Awareness is still treated as a background, but it is now seen as the Source and Ground of all beings and things... not a personal presence.
However... the non-dual aspect is different as it is no longer 'Universal Awareness' but 'Awareness is the Universe'. There is simply the universe manifesting this moment as a pure nondual consciousness experience... Consciousness/Awareness is this arising sound, sight, thought, etc. Awareness AS Universe... no longer Universal Awareness. This part requires dissolving the sense of an ultimate background identity, the Big Self of Universal Awareness...

Thusness:
Great insight!
However you are still not clear about where exactly the questions are leading you. Think deeper and understand what I told you in msn. I got to go now. 🙂

Non-doership is just one of the aspects of anatta, by itself it is not the anatta realization. (Thusness Stage 5: "...Phase 5 is quite thorough in being no one and I would call this anatta in all 3 aspects -- no subject/object division, no doer-ship and absence of agent...") One can experience non-doership during the I AM phase, or for some people even before the I AM realization. Hence non-doership is not equivalent with anatta realization.

Although the aspect of non-doership itself does not indicate the realization of anatta, this does not mean it is not important. Particularly, non-doership becomes clearly experienced when the John Tan's first stanza of anatta is penetrated and clearly realised. However, the first stanza of anatta is not merely non-doership, as explained in the conversation below. The first stanza of anatta conveys both absence of agent and non-doership, and not just non-doership. Commenting on someone's breakthrough, John Tan said, "More towards second stanza [of anatta], non-doership is equally important." and on someone else, "Non-dual but can't discern clearly the difference between conventionalities and ultimate. Did it talk about natural spontaneity? [In] The 2 stanzas of anatta, the non-doership will lead to natural spontaneity. Currently it is talking about freedom from observer and observed, but the second part of realising appearances are just empty clarity isn't there. Therefore effortlessness of vivid presence will not be possible without these 2 insights as base."

Session Start: Saturday, March 07, 2009

(1:47 AM) AEN: i just read kiloby's article on no doer... his anatta insight is mostly on the Stanza 1 rite?
https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.kiloby.com%2Fkiloby2homecorrect_020.htm&data=04%7C01%7C%7C38257fcf79a54b61ba8008d8b336ea2a%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637456395719910027%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2l

uMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=pfLlAw1L6uc%2FxvLt6y2DQIgJIJHr72zGbmq7MNhudXc%3D&reserved=0

(1:49 AM) AEN: i tink wat he said is like wat you said in stanza 1... except that its more on spontaneous arising but without mentioning conditions
(1:50 AM) AEN: actually he did mention conditioning a bit also
(1:52 AM) Thusness: yes more on that but only the no doership. not seeing that there is no agent as a phenomena. and not seeing DO
(1:53 AM) AEN: oic..
what do you mean 'no agent as a phenomena.'
(1:54 AM) Thusness: means seeing there is no agent, that is without the subject in experience. than there is no controller, no co-ordinator, no agent that links. means on phenomena. not only doership. that there is no agent and phenomena. only phenomena exist. get it? that is different from no doership. means one, just that doing. means seeing the actual phenomena that there is no agent, just phenomena. get it?
(1:57 AM) AEN: oic..
ya i tink longchen realised no doer first rite b4 seeing non dual the no agent is the non dual?
(1:58 AM) Thusness: no agent as no doership...means in terms of controlling, coordinating
(1:59 AM) Thusness: means there can be an agent, but that agent has no control
this means no doership. the other is the absence of an agent in phenomena. usually there are 2, the subject and the object
(1:59 AM) Thusness: get it?
(2:00 AM) AEN: oic..
yea i remember
galen sharp talked about
u are the watcher, but there is no doer
so thats only seeing the no doer aspect rite
(2:00 AM) Thusness: not no doer. no doership
(2:01 AM) AEN: ya
(2:01 AM) Thusness: one is referring to the phenomena as an entity. one is referring to whether we have control over anything that is different
(2:01 AM) AEN: oic..
(2:02 AM) Thusness: means i do not see 2, i only see 1, in no doer
(2:02 AM) Thusness: while no doership is seeing spontaneity without control. get it?
(2:03 AM) AEN: yeah
so no doer = no agent + no doership
(2:03 AM) AEN: ?
(2:03 AM) Thusness: yeah
(2:03 AM) AEN: icic
(2:03 AM) AEN: kiloby talks about an agent?
(2:04 AM) Thusness: actually both but not clear.

In Soh’s I AM phase, John Tan told him not to mistaken anatta with [mere] non-doership:

“Not to talk too much about me, just focus on your experience. Also what you said about the no observer can be quite misleading. It does not mean there is 'no one doing anything' and 'everything is arising spontaneously'. You should understand anatta from below quotations taken from 'The Sun My Heart' by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh:

"When we say I know the wind is blowing, we don't think that there is something blowing something else. "Wind' goes with 'blowing'. If there is no blowing, there is no wind. It is the same with knowing. Mind is the knower; the knower is mind. We are talking about knowing in relation to the wind. 'To know' is to know something. Knowing is inseparable from the wind. Wind and knowing are one. We can say, 'Wind,' and that is enough. The presence of wind indicates the presence of knowing, and the presence of the action of blowing'." ~ Thich Nhat Hanh, The Sun My Heart

"..The most universal verb is the verb 'to be'': I am, you are, the mountain is, a river is. The verb 'to be' does not express the dynamic living state of the universe. To express that we must say 'become.' These two verbs can also be used as nouns: 'being", "becoming". But being what? Becoming what? 'Becoming' means 'evolving ceaselessly', and is as universal as the verb "to be." It is not possible to express the "being" of a phenomenon and its "becoming" as if the two were independent. In the case of wind, blowing is the being and the becoming...." ~ Thich Nhat Hanh, The Sun My Heart

"In any phenomena, whether psychological, physiological, or physical, there is dynamic movement, life. We can say that this movement, this life, is the universal manifestation, the most commonly recognized action of knowing. We must not regard 'knowing' as something from the outside which comes to breathe life into the universe. It is the life of the universe itself. The dance and the dancer are one." ~ Thich Nhat Hanh, The Sun My Heart

Comments by John Tan in 2009 on these paragraphs from “The Sun My Heart” (see excerpts in Sun of Awareness and River of Perceptions),

"...as a verb, as action, there can be no concept, only experience. Non-dual anatta (no-self) is the experience of subject/Object as verb, as action. There is no mind, only mental activities... ...Source as the passing phenomena... and how non-dual appearance is understood from Dependent Origination perspective."

Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh:

"When we say it's raining, we mean that raining is taking place. You don't need someone up above to perform the raining. It's not that there is the rain, and there is the one who causes the rain to fall. In fact, when you say the rain is falling, it's very funny, because if it weren't falling, it wouldn't be rain. In our way of speaking, we're used to having a subject and a verb. That's why we need the word "it" when we say, "it rains." "It" is the subject, the one who makes the rain possible. But, looking deeply, we don't need a "rainer," we just need the rain. Raining and the rain are the same. The formations of birds and the birds are the same -- there's no "self," no boss involved.

There's a mental formation called vitarka, "initial thought." When we use the verb "to think" in English, we need a subject of the verb: I think, you think, he thinks. But, really, you don't need a subject for a thought to be produced. Thinking without a thinker -- it's absolutely possible. To think is to think about something. To perceive is to perceive

something. The perceiver and the perceived object that is perceived are one.

When Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am," his point was that if I think, there must be an "I" for thinking to be possible. When he made the declaration "I think," he believed that he could demonstrate that the "I" exists. We have the strong habit or believing in a self. But, observing very deeply, we can see that a thought does not need a thinker to be possible. There is no thinker behind the thinking -- there is just the thinking; that's enough.

Now, if Mr. Descartes were here, we might ask him, "Monsieur Descartes, you say, 'You think, therefore you are.' But what are you? You are your thinking. Thinking -- that's enough. Thinking manifests without the need of a self behind it."

Thinking without a thinker. Feeling without a feeler. What is our anger without our 'self'? This is the object of our meditation. All the fifty-one mental formations take place and manifest without a self behind them arranging for this to appear, and then for that to appear. Our mind consciousness is in the habit of basing itself on the idea of self, on manas. But we can meditate to be more aware of our store consciousness, where we keep the seeds of all those mental formations that are not currently manifesting in our mind.

When we meditate, we practice looking deeply in order to bring light and clarity into our way of seeing things. When the vision of no-self is obtained, our delusion is removed. This is what we call transformation. In the Buddhist tradition, transformation is possible with deep understanding. The moment the vision of no-self is there, manas, the elusive notion of 'I am,' disintegrates, and we find ourselves enjoying, in this very moment, freedom and happiness."

- Choosing

Even when non-dual is realized in the case of Stage 4, Awareness can still be misunderstood in terms of the second type of non-dual, rather than the third (which is anatta and empty-clarity):

The Three Levels of "Understanding" of Non-dual Awareness

“Originally posted by An Eternal Now:
What I said here, is not really correct. Thought is, but no thinker. Sound is, but no hearer. Awareness cannot be separated from thoughts and manifestation.

John Tan replied:
Yes but what said can still have the following scenario:

1. There is an Awareness reflecting thoughts and manifestation. ("I AM").
Mirror bright is experienced but distorted. Dualistic and Inherent seeing.

2. Thoughts and manifestation are required for the mirror to see itself.
Non-Dualistic but Inherent seeing. Beginning of non-dual insight.

3. Thoughts and manifestation have always been the mirror (The mirror here is seen as a whole).
Non-Dualistic and non-inherent insight.

In 3 not even a quantum line can be drawn from whatever arises; whatever that appears to come and goes is the Awareness itself. There is no Awareness other than that. We should use the teachings of Anatta *(no-self)*, DO *(dependent origination)* and Emptiness to see the 'forms' of awareness.” - John Tan, 2009

The second case is similar to the cyber sangha 17 year old kid quoted in Phase 4, that said “They [the reflections] are the mirror, yet the mirror isn't the reflections.” In Phase 5, the reflections are the mirror and there is no mirror besides the reflections/on-going manifesting/reflecting (whatever arises is Presencing with no Presence besides those colors, sounds, sensations, scents, tastes, thoughts), nothing unchanging or independent and self-standing, no need for a metaphysical essence at all. The sense of being an ultimate and changeless metaphysical essence, source and substratum is replaced by pure manifestation and one then begins to penetrate into Dependent Origination as the mechanism of pure manifestation (see Stage 6).

Thanissaro Bhikkhu said in a commentary on this sutta Mulapariyaya Sutta: The Root Sequence - https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/MN/MN1.html:

Although at present we rarely think in the same terms as the Samkhya philosophers, there has long been — and still is — a common tendency to create a "Buddhist" metaphysics in which the experience of emptiness, the Unconditioned, the Dharma-body, Buddha-nature, rigpa, etc., is said to function as the ground of being from which the "All" — the entirety of our sensory & mental experience — is said to spring and to which we return when we meditate. Some people think that these theories are the inventions of scholars without any direct meditative experience, but actually they have most often originated among meditators, who label (or in the words of the discourse, "perceive") a particular meditative experience as the ultimate goal, identify with it in a subtle way (as when we are told that "we are the knowing"), and then view that level of experience as the ground of being out of which all other experience comes.
Any teaching that follows these lines would be subject to the same criticism that the Buddha directed against the monks who first heard this discourse.

Rob Burbea said regarding that sutta in Realizing the Nature of Mind:

One time the Buddha to a group of monks and he basically told them not to see Awareness as The Source of all things. So this sense of there being a vast awareness and everything just appears out of that and disappears back into it, beautiful as that is, he told them that’s actually not a skillful way of viewing reality. And that is a very interesting sutta, because it’s one of the only suttas where at the end it doesn’t say the monks rejoiced in his words.

This group of monks didn’t want to hear that. They were quite happy with that level of insight, lovely as it was, and it said the monks did not rejoice in the Buddha’s words. (laughter) And similarly, one runs into this as a teacher, I have to say. This level is so attractive, it has so much of the flavor of something ultimate, that often times people are unbudgeable there.

2009:

“(11:48 AM) Thusness: the advaita experience will sort of see awareness as permeating and transcending
that is because the view is rest upon subject-object dualism. if it is resting upon DO (dependent origination), there is no such problem. How important is the 'Source' if it is resting on a view that has no source, center, substantiality and inherent essence? it becomes irrelevant and erroneous and nothing to boast about. Only when we rest our view on a 'Source', Ultimate reality seems very special.”

The realization of the self-luminosity of manifestation - an important criteria for Stage 5 - hasn’t arisen in all of these earlier phases of mere non-doership, impersonality and non-dual (non-dual luminosity is also experienced in Stage 4 but reified into an unchanging awareness inseparable from manifestation, but in Stage 5 even that something unchanging is seen through and dissolved). Daniel Ingram explains well the self-luminosity of manifestation below:

https://www.dharmaoverground.org/.../mess.../message/9383580

DhO questioner: What is Luminosity?

Daniel M. Ingram:
Luminosity is both a useful and possibly very misleading term.

Here's what it is doesn't mean: that a person will suddenly see things more brightly, that there will be more light in things than the standard amount, or anything like that.

Here's what it points to, said a number of equivalent ways:

1) In the seeing, just the seen. In the hearing, just the heard. In cognition, just the cognized. In feeling, just the felt... This standard line from the Bahiya of the Bark Cloth Sutta in the Udana is one of the most profound there is in the whole of the Pali Canon. It means that sensations are just sensations, simply that, with no knower, doer, be-er (not beer, as that is a beverage), or self in them to be found at all.

2) Point one, taken in its logical inverse, means that the "light" of awareness is in things where they are, including all of the space between/around/through them equally.

3) Said another way, things just are aware/manifest/occurring where they are just as they are, extremely straightforwardly.

Helpful?

Daniel

Luminous Presence may come at a later phase for a practitioner depending on conditions, Pellucid No-Self vs Non-Doership

For John Tan, Soh and many others, the aspect of luminous Presence-Awareness is realized even at their earliest phases of development.

However, some people may have certain understanding (perhaps not direct realization) into emptiness, and certain insights into non-dual anatta, without the direct realization of luminous Presence. Without this aspect, one’s experiential insights are still incomplete.

“Pellucid No-Self, Non-Doership

Of late I had a few conversations with a number of people whose experience of no-self is skewed towards non-doership rather than pellucid no-self, the pellucidity of luminosity in nondual and no-self. John Tan too have similar encounters. At the most their insight is into the first stanza of anatta but not the second https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../on-anatta... .
I think I will need to write an article on this in AtR blog and guide.
[8:39 PM, 6/9/2021] John Tan: Yes more on no-doership.
[8:40 PM, 6/9/2021] John Tan: 1. Dzogchen has a phrase "spontaneous presence". I do not know it's exact meaning in dzogchen however the phrase is intimately related to the 2 experiences of the 2 stanzas:
1. No doership = spontaneous
2. Mere appearances as Presence
Imo, she is more on 1 not so much on 2 so far in her descriptions."
"[11:25 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: Like in prasangika mmk, the non-affirming negation, in the phases of insights approach of the 2 stanzas,one is not interested in the affirmation, just the thorough deconstruction of self construct. The seeing through of self in anatta is the direct experiential taste of non-dual, purity and spontaneity.
[11:39 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: So when someone describe to u, they say they have deconstruct self/Self but there is no direct taste of colors, smell, sensation, sound, no direct face to face of the radiance, pellucidity, purity, spontaneity, insubstantiality and non-duality of appearances, is that genuine authentication?
[12:00 AM, 5/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: No its not.. more like impersonality
[12:00 AM, 5/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Or nondoership"
“Immediate Present, Ultimate Dharma
Since our activity is not a progression from delusion to enlightenment made solely by the independent self, Dogen defines the first thought of practice as 'immediate present ultimate Dharma' or genjokoan: the presence and perfection of all dharmas as they are in the here-and-now.' Hee-Jin Kim further explains the meaning of genjokoan:
'It does not suggest an evolutionary ascent from hidden-ness to manifestation, or from imperfection to perfection, or conversely, an emanational descent from one to many, or from reality to appearance. Rather, things, events, beings are already unmistakably what they truly are; what is more, they are vibrant, transparent, and bright in their as-they-are-

ness.'” - Zen teacher Shinshu Roberts”

“At this time, everything in the Universe in the ten directions - soil, earth, grass, and trees; fences, walls, tiles and pebbles - perform the Buddha’s work... The grass, trees, soil, earth reached by this guiding influence all radiate great brightness, and their preaching of the deep and fine dharma is without end.
~ Zen Master Dogen
19 Comments
•
John Tan
Coincidentally I was watching anime 斗罗大陆, it expresses the experience and taste of total exertion beautifully. I can feel for the character where his clarity loses every trace into the natural radiance and purity of the trees, the flowing river, the wind, the smell and the light.
5”

2006:

“(1:19 AM) John: it is very difficult to stabilize the no-self stage.

(1:19 AM) John: haahahha....it can take many many years.

(1:19 AM) AEN: oic..

(1:20 AM) John: depending on longchen [Sim Pern Chong] conditions, i hope he can go through 2 more break-through to stabilize a lil.

(1:20 AM) AEN: 2 more break through?

(1:20 AM) AEN: icic

(1:21 AM) John: you think initial break-through means that's all....kok your head

(1:21 AM) AEN: haha no la

(1:21 AM) John: still need some time.

(1:21 AM) AEN: icic

(1:22 AM) John: the realness and vividness of the phenomenal world and self-arising (self-so) is very important. (comments by Soh: realness and vividness related to second anatta stanza, self-arising related to first stanza) he almost need to break the layer of 'thinking mechanism' completely to see it. now he will still have a hard time fighting with this habitual tendency

(1:23 AM) AEN: oic..

(1:23 AM) John: the subtle imprints of the labels and names will confuse him. That is why i told you to post at his site. hope it can sink into his consciousness. only the realness and self-arising can break-lose this layer....it is quite tough....and will suffer a lil.”

“Unmanifested is the manifestation,
The no-thing of everything,
Completely still yet ever flowing,
This is the spontaneous arising nature of the source.
Simply Self-So.
Use self-so to overcome conceptualization.
Dwell completely into the incredible realness of the phenomenal world.” – John Tan, 2006

“Pellucidity in no-self is important. [second stanza] But this does not mean the non-doership or no agent aspect of first stanza is less important. As John Tan also said about someone else:
"More towards second stanza, non-doership is equally important.” – Soh, 2021

“Anatta and Pure Presence
Someone told me about having been through insights of no self and then progressing to a realisation of the ground of being.

I replied:

Hi ____

Thanks for the sharing.

This is the I AM realization. Had that realisation after contemplating Before birth, who am I? For two years. It’s an important realization. Many people had insights into certain aspects of no self, impersonality, and “dry non dual experience” without doubtless realization of Presence. Therefore I AM realisation is a progression for them.

Similarly in Zen, asking who am I is to directly experience presence. How about asking a koan of what is the cup? What is the chirping bird, the thunder clap? What is its purpose?

When I talked about anatta, it is a direct insight of Presence and recognizing what we called background presence, is in the forms and colours, sounds and sensations, clean and pure. Authentication is be authenticated by all things. Also there is no presence other than that. What we call background is really just an image of foreground Presence, even when Presence is assuming its subtle formless all pervasiveness.

However due to ignorance, we have a very inherent and dual view, if we do see through the nature of presence, the mind continues to be influenced by dualistic and inherent tendencies. Many teach to overcome it through mere non conceptuality but this is highly misleading.

Thusness also wrote in 2018:

The anatta I realized is quite unique. It is not just a realization of no-self. But it must first have an intuitive insight of Presence. Otherwise will have to reverse the phases of insights”

“If you are skewing towards non-doership, you can contemplate and practice to realise and experience the luminosity aspect:

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2020/11/what-is-your-very-mind-right-now.html

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/02/the-transient-universe-has-heart.html

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/04/tada.html

https://wwzc.org/dharma-text/komyozo-zanmai-practice-treasury-luminosity

etc etc”
“In addition to what you wrote, I hope to convey another dimension of Presence to you. That is Encountering Presence in its first impression, unadulterated and full blown in stillness.

So after reading it, just feel it with your entire body-mind and forgot about it. Don't let it corrupt your mind. 😝

Presence, Awareness, Beingness, Isness are all synonyms. There can be all sorts of definitions but all these are not the path to it. The path to it must be non-conceptual and direct. This is the only way.

When contemplating the koan "before birth who am I", the thinking mind attempts to seek into it's memory bank for similar experiences to get an answer. This is how the thinking mind works - compare, categorize and measure in order to understand.

However when we encounter such a koan, the mind reaches its limit when it tries to penetrate its own depth with no answer. It will come a time the mind exhausts itself and come to a complete standstill and from that stillness comes an earthshaking BAM!

I. Just I.

Before birth this I, a thousand years ago this I, a thousand later this I. I AM I.

It is without any arbitrary thoughts, any comparisons. It fully authenticates it's own clarity, it's own existence, ITSELF in clean, pure, direct non-conceptuality. No why, no because.

Just ITSELF in stillness nothing else.

Intuit the vipassana and the samatha. Intuit the total exertion and realization. The essence of message must be raw and uncontaminated by words. It cannot be secondhand.

Hope that helps!

...

...There is nothing underneath everything, in the state of I AM, it is just I AM. The rest of the 5 sense doors are shut. Everything else is excluded. It is called I simply because of the koan, nothing else.

What’s experienced is similar to hearing sound without the sense of hearer. So keep the experience but refine the view.” - John Tan to someone in Awakening to Reality Discussion Group, 2019

“Thanks for the sharing.

This is the I AM realization. Had that realisation after contemplating Before birth, who am I? For two years. It’s an important realization. Many people had insights into certain aspects of no self, impersonality, and “dry non dual experience” without doubtless realization of Presence. Therefore I AM realisation is a progression for them.

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However due to ignorance, we have a very inherent and dual view, if we do see through the nature of presence, the mind continues to be influenced by dualistic and inherent tendencies. Many teach to overcome it through mere non conceptuality but this is highly misleading.” - Soh, 2018

“I was having a conversation with someone today (he had some history with various practices, vipassana, actual freedom, and recently came across a famous Thai ajahn, etc) who shared about an experience of dissolving into centerless space. I told him what I call anatta is not just being centerless, it is the effulgence and radiance of the transience. That is, regardless of any realization of no-self, and no matter how centerless one feels or how centerless is one's experience of awareness and so forth... still, anything short of direct realization of the radiance or luminosity as the very stuff of transiency is still not what I call the realization of anatta. (And that too is also just an aspect of anatta, and furthermore not yet into the twofold emptying)”

~ Soh, 2018

Even after anatta, John Tan has at times told me to revisit the aspect of I AM. It is possible, even important, to integrate that quality and taste. He also calls it ‘reversing the cycle of insight’. One may need to cycle through the phases of insights, sort of to refresh one’s practice and deepen it, for a few rounds.

“After the maturity of anatta insight and twofold emptiness, eventually there is effortless, ongoing and intense experience of "everything as Self", "As in that experience of I AM powerfully present at this moment", "As if like Awareness clear and open like space, without meditation yet powerfully present and non-dual. Where the 4 Aspects of I AM are fully experienced in this moment. This experience will become more and more powerful later yet effortless and uncontrived. How so? If it is not correct insights and practice, how is it possible for such complete and total experience of effortless and uncontrived Presence be possible?". "Indeed and this is being authenticated by the immediate moment of experience. How could there be doubt about it. The last trace of Presence must be released with seeing through the emptiness nature of whatever arises. After maturing and integrating your insights into practice, there must be no effort and action.... The entire whole is doing the work and arises as this vivid moment of shimmering appearance, this has always been what we always called Presence." "Yes and you should in all moment of 6 entries and exits experience all coming together for this moment to arise....this will dissolve all senses of holdings and will lead you effortless and maha experience of suchness effortlessly", "interpenetration, open, boundless, effortless and uncontrived."” - John Tan, 2012

“There is a very intense and much deeper state I assure you...but there is clear understanding that the manifestation is it....however awareness is like an unbounded and limitless expanse field. The luminosity is intensely clear, the experience is like Non-Dual Awareness broke loose and exist as an unbounded FIELD. There is a difference in seeing sound and a hearer and realizing sound as awareness itself. You cannot focus and there cannot be any sense of effort, there cannot be any sense of boundaries, just itself. You must be very very stable and mature in the anatta state, and you cannot be in an enclosed room... it is the effortlessness and crystal clear transparency and intensity of luminosity... but duality must no more trouble the practitioner, phenomena is clearly understood as the radiance... so nothing is obscuring then in total effortless and emanation arises and the expanse just continues", "one mind is subsuming, therefore there is a sense of dual. In this case there isn't. It is like a drop of water landed on the surface of a clear ocean. The nature of water and ocean are one and the same...nothing containing anything, when sounds and music arise... they are like water and waves in ocean... everything is it" - John Tan, 2013

Thusness said to Soh in 2013:

"As I suspected (thumbs up) I mean the rainbow body. That can only be done after realization of twofold emptiness and intensity of luminosity into the three states (waking, dreaming, deep sleep)... you are doing pretty well. The integration has been progressing well of the non-dual bliss into your deep sleep state, in view of the short period after your realization of anatta. The inner core must completely disappear and the intensity of luminosity must heighten... Sensations will become transparent and crystal sharp clear.

At present the core center is gone... You write too much and have too little rest. Your mind must have enough time to rest in non-conceptuality of the 6 entries and exits. Otherwise it will not be easy for you to penetrate further. After realizing the twofold emptying there is no more boundaries between mind, appearances and apparent objects and experience becomes seamless... All is mind or this integrated activity. Then we should actualize and integrate this realization.

In touching, both subject and object are both emptied and deconstructed into a single activity of touch and the intensity of luminous clarity must be strong... is it strong now? Or just like passing thoughts with no intensity. Now penetration of the 3 states is only supported by the strength of your view and realization, not by the intensity of your non-conceptual experience.

"In essence rainbow body is a realization..." Maybe actualization of realization (would be better), in essence it is an actualized state."

my comment: Dzogchen practitioners use the term 'Realization' differently than I and Thusness, 'Realization' could mean something like full actualization or Buddhahood for them and not just an initial insight/recognition/experience.

Also what Thusness said here may be unrelated to Dzogchen rainbow body and is just a personal advise.” - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2013/03/rainbow-body-and-thusness-advice-to-me.html

Alan Watts: The Silent Mind

John Tan

All the 4 parts of his talks [The Silent Mind] are good.👍

Soh Wei Yu
https://youtu.be/eIh6VRoTDY8

John Tan: What do you find lacking in Alan Watt's "The silent mind" talk?

He spoke of anatta, seeing DO, emptiness of mental constructs, effortlessness and spontaneity, in the flow but what is missing? Or do you see anything missing?

[12:35 PM, 9/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Didnt describe intensity of luminosity?
[12:37 PM, 9/1/2020] John Tan: Yes. Directness always have this clean, pure, pristine and transparent taste because there no imputation blocking.

On someone else:

[6:13 PM, 9/1/2020] John Tan: Possible but experience should be natural and spontaneous, no strain and no effort.

What appears is fully transparent, vivid, pure, clean and pristine as the layer that blocks dissapears.

Until each moment of experience is free from observer and observed, just natural spontaneous pellucid appearance in obviousness.

When we de-construct more and more, we will also notice the relationship between radiance energy and mental deconstructions. The universe will reveal itself more and more as radiance of vibrational energies in dance rather than "concrete things".
[6:16 PM, 9/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[6:23 PM, 9/1/2020] John Tan: As for non-conceptuality, it is not a mind trying to free itself from symbols and language. Rather it is the insight that sees through mental constructs (reifications) and conventionalities. It is an unbinding process of freeing the mind from being blinded by the semantics of conventions (existence, physicality, cause and effect, production) that is more crucial.”

Even if luminosity and anatta is realised, there are differing depths. In the first few months after anatta realization (2010) for Soh, the luminosity was very strong and samadhi (absorption) state in daily life is strong. Afterwards, it sort of diminished slightly. However it became much stronger at a later phase, especially 2018~2019 onwards:

“It's not often that I get to walk in dark places in Singapore, there's street lights everywhere. Yesterday I was walking somewhere that was dark and yet the light of boundless presence was so dazzling. Truly, there can be no darkness when your whole body-mind-universe is light, the light that 'outshines' all lights and darknesses, and yet is also none other than the lights and darknesses, the sounds and the silence.

Was reminded of a verse in the Upanishads, "Verily, for him who thus knows this Brahma—Upanishad, the sun does not rise or set. For him it is day for ever."” - Soh, 2018

“Lately the intensity here seems to be intensifying even further and whole body-mind-universe is/are spheres of boundless light as manifestation, the textures and details of the moment.

Was jogging just now and this boundless light (empty-clarity as the whole infinite field of manifestation) just keeps intensifying and intensifying into complete stunning brilliance, and had this out of body feel -- which is not a dissociated state (I can no longer experience subject/object dualistic state nor dissociation, nondual is always experienced here) but like a dispersing into the infinite field, and yet this is not mere mind-body drop as mind-body drop is already my ever-present state for many years.” - Soh, 2018

“Like pure open awareness. Lol. Without center without boundaries. However it is often misinterpreted as always...something behind. Don't hold on to any experience, not the radiance. Allow the knowledge of emptiness to seamlessly integrate into radiance clarity. Let the radiance be as light as feather but immense like universe. Don't be intense.

[24/3/19, 6:19:06 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Today the sense of tightness seems loosening and yet the radiance is still as clear.. I had headache two days ago dunno why. Maybe some tenseness
[24/3/19, 6:19:18 PM] John Tan: Yes. Because you don't know how to relax. You have wrong understanding attempting to focus on intensity unknowingly, wanted to feel more. Therefore I kept telling you relax, don't hold, be as light as feather and as immense as universe. With practice Awareness will stand out, more braman than braman... lol. However that is an emergence effect due to evenness of pristine empty clarity.” - John Tan, 2019

“Presence is experienced as very fine energetic vibrations even in daily life these days.. in the five senses, don’t know how to describe it well.” - Soh

“The Absolute as separated from the transience is what I have indicated as the 'Background' in my 2 posts to theprisonergreco.

84. RE: Is there an absolute reality? [Skarda 4 of 4]
Mar 27 2009, 9:15 AM EDT | Post edited: Mar 27 2009, 9:15 AM EDT
Hi theprisonergreco,

First is what exactly is the ‘background’? Actually it doesn’t exist. It is only an image of a ‘non-dual’ experience that is already gone. The dualistic mind fabricates a ‘background’ due to the poverty of its dualistic and inherent thinking mechanism. It ‘cannot’ understand or function without something to hold on to. That experience of the ‘I’ is a complete, non-dual foreground experience.

When the background subject is understood as an illusion, all transience phenomena reveal themselves as Presence. It is like naturally 'vipassanic' throughout. From the hissing sound of PC, to the vibration of the moving MRT train, to the sensation when the feet touches the ground, all these experiences are crystal clear, no less “I AM” than “I AM”. The Presence is still fully present, nothing is denied. -:) So the “I AM” is just like any other experiences when the subject-

object split is gone. No different from an arising sound. It only becomes a static background as an afterthought when our dualistic and inherent tendencies are in action.

The first 'I-ness' stage of experiencing awareness face to face is like a point on a sphere which you called it the center. You marked it.

Then later you realized that when you marked other points on the surface of a sphere, they have the same characteristics. This is the initial experience of non-dual. Once the insight of No-Self is stabilized, you just freely point to any point on the surface of the sphere -- all points are a center, hence there is no 'the' center. 'The' center does not exist: all points are a center.

After then practice move from 'concentrative' to 'effortlessness'. That said, after this initial non-dual insight, 'background' will still surface occasionally for another few years due to latent tendencies...

86. RE: Is there an absolute reality? [Skarda 4 of 4]
To be more exact, the so called 'background' consciousness is that pristine happening. There is no a 'background' and a 'pristine happening'. During the initial phase of non-dual, there is still habitual attempt to 'fix' this imaginary split that does not exist. It matures when we realized that anatta is a seal, not a stage; in hearing, always only sounds; in seeing always only colors, shapes and forms; in thinking, always only thoughts. Always and already so. -:)

Many non-dualists after the intuitive insight of the Absolute hold tightly to the Absolute. This is like attaching to a point on the surface of a sphere and calling it 'the one and only center'. Even for those Advaitins that have clear experiential insight of no-self (no object-subject split), an experience similar to that of anatta (First emptying of subject) are not spared from these tendencies. They continue to sink back to a Source.

It is natural to reference back to the Source when we have not sufficiently dissolved the latent disposition but it must be correctly understood for what it is. Is this necessary and how could we rest in the Source when we cannot even locate its whereabout? Where is that resting place? Why sink back? Isn't that another illusion of the mind? The 'Background' is just a thought moment to recall or an attempt to reconfirm the Source. How is this necessary? Can we even be a thought moment apart? The tendency to grasp, to solidify experience into a 'center' is a habitual tendency of the mind at work. It is just a karmic tendency. Realize It! This is what I meant to Adam the difference between One-Mind and No-Mind.”
- John Tan, 2009, excerpt from Emptiness as Viewless View and Embracing the Transience https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/04/emptiness-as-viewless-view.html

There are those that have very clear understanding of sunyata, and yet lack direct taste of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) and luminosity and clear realization of anatta (direct realization of radiance/effulgence in/as transience), and in that case the luminosity must come up in later phases. But for those who went through I AM phase first, there is not much danger of missing out the luminosity aspect of direct realization, and it is just a path of letting that luminosity's taste and nature unfold into complete freedom from fabrication and effortless, spontaneous perfection.

As John Tan also wrote in 2011:

John: now what pegembara said is more like sunyata and emptiness. but that is understanding. it is like dharma dan. the intensity of luminosity is not fully appreciated

Soh: I see, but dharma dan does have realization right. You mean like the insight is there but not the depth of experience

John: no. I mean luminosity. you are too worried about who is realized and who is not
and completely missing the essence of what that is being conveyed. if no one is there to point out to you, then you can get stuck for a very long period. so you must be pay more attention to this

Soh: Stuck in what

John: pegembara lacks the luminosity. get stuck in 'not seeing'. means no penetration in insight. pegembara is like having phase 6 understanding but lack the intensity of luminosity
and phase 6 direct insight. yet you are talking about dharma dan. are you going to help dharma dan now? is he writing the blog? you are not attending because you are so caught up on who has realized what even it is not here. so if there is no one to point out to you, how are you to progress with this sort of mindset
what must be your advice to pegembara?

Soh: To look into the intensity of luminosity?

John: in this case, he must have direct PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience)
because he lacks this. for the pces, you must point out what pegembara said but in a skillful way. for tarin’s case, you must penetrate the difference between the agent and the sense of self

Soh: What you mean by point out what pegembara said

John: then there is depth of insight of the immediate moment. otherwise you are always just pouring out from memory. means you are not practicing in daily activity, you are staying at the conceptual level. this is the actual situation and conditions and you apply skillful means accordingly. also from what pegembara said, you must also realized that from what he said, he has great potential for he brought out several important points

Soh Wei Yu In 2008, Tsultrim Tserri wrote:

“Mind has often been likened to a mirror, but the analogy goes only so far, because mirrors exist and mind doesn't, well let's say that one can touch mirrors. What existence means, particularly at these levels, would be a fruitful topic, but one

that I will not cover. Also , mind doesn't really reflect phenomena, it is the phenomena themselves. This is covered further down in these 4 prajnas, but for clarity I thought I should mention that.

"John' or "suchness" is what one feels with the experience of emptiness. It is a solid sense of being (yes, emptiness has a solid or one could say rich feeling). The luminescence of mind can be compared the the surface of a mirror. If the mirror is dirty it doesn't have a bright surface, and if mind is filled with obscuration its awareness is dimmed. With the experience of emptiness, phenomena become more vivid. It is said in the post that this confirms one's entrance into Zen. In the vajrayana, this vividness of mind is called "osel" in Tibetan, and it is a sign that one has entered the vajrayana. In my experience, this is quite far along the path. To get to this point, one would have to experience egolessness of self, egolessness of other, nondualty, emptiness, and only then luminosity.

From another thread: *"Exist is a tricky word in Buddhism. Mind does not exist in the sense of being a thing, but it does exist as well, otherwise how would we be able to see, hear etc.*
Having said that, for an individual, there is nothing "outside of awareness." Everything that happens to us happens in our awareness(it's not ours, but so what). Furthermore, we are literally everything that happens in our awareness. There is no self; we are simply the world. if we see a chair in our kitchen, that is what we are at that moment since there is no separation between phenomena and mind. Phenomena are mind and mind is phenomena.
Tsultrim"

John: this tsultrim's insight is stage 6. truly good. not many can truly feel the differences. it is only until a certain phase of experience then that clarity comes. and often in tremendous in the stability of thoughtlessness... thought almost seldom arise and one becomes the full vividness of arising phenomena. is he a dzogchen practitioner?

Soh: I think mahamudra. he talks about the four yoga. "(Yes, this agrees, in my opinion, with "nonmeditation" in the 4 yogas of mahamudra, the last and most fruitional yoga of mahamudra." and he linked the 4 jnanas to the 4 yogas

John: actually what he said about prajna and jhana is quite good. But you have to know that it is not the sort of jhana as in concentration. it is the experience of effortlessness in non-dual luminosity. There will come a time every day mundane activities, practice and enlightenment is just one substance.

Soh: no he said jnana. jnana is more like knowledge. not jhana absorption

John: I see. There will come a time when emptiness becomes so clear and the separation is no more then without the need to recall or remind. The last veil that separates is like permanently gone. Then there is no practice because all moments of arising phenomena is just one practice.

Soh: I see.. That’s what he means by observing emptiness and 'being' emptiness right. I mean the difference between it

In a post above, I distinguished between the two. I know you asked Matylda, but until she replies, if she does, possibly I could be of help.
Prajna is the tool that sees emptiness. It is actually an expansion of awareness, using awareness in the context of mindfulness/awareness. Awareness gets to a point where it discovers the nature of mind which includes emptiness. At that point, awareness transforms into prajna. There are lesser stages of prajna as well, but I would have to review them.
Prajna has been likened to the mother of all the Buddhas, because through its activity the mind that becomes the Buddha mind is born. Actually, it has always been there, and is unborn, but let's not quibble.

So, prajna sees emptiness. When first seen, however, one feels emptiness as separate from what has discovered it. There is still a slight trace of dualism. We experience this dualism as a seeking for emptiness ie there is a seeker and something sought. At the realization of jnana, this duality melts, so to speak, and emptiness exists or doesn't exist without a sense of something observing it. Also, one attains wisdom when emptiness arises, not wisdom about anything, simply being in the state of wisdom. With prajna, one observes that wisdom; with jnana, one becomes it.
Tsultrim

John: jnana here does not refer to the type of concentration like it said. It is an effortless non-dual luminous experience due to the maturing of prajna.
I have often said clear until absorbed. Vividness of forms.
It is the outcome of the clarity of insight due to the dissolving of that tendency to divide. It is natural, not a form of attention or concentration. This should not be misunderstood.
He mentioned about luminosity is the last fruition stage and one must go through emptiness to realise this stage.
This is not exactly right. :) Advaita Vedanta practitioner will experience the opposite. :)

Soh: but for mahamudra it is like that right, theravada also? like dharma dan

John: yes. it is because of right view. without the right view, you will experience luminosity aspect of awareness without knowing its empty nature. that is more dangerous. therefore establishment of right view is most important. Seeds are planted. It is better not to experience then to experience the wrong stuff and makes it more difficult to get out of the dualistic experience of Eternal Witness.

(Comments by Soh: Regarding whether it is important to go through I AM realization or can we skip to anatta -- John Tan and I and Sim Pern Chong have had differing and evolving opinions about this over the years (I remember Sim Pern Chong saying he thinks people can skip it altogether, John also wondered if it is possible or advisable as certain AF people seem to have skipped it but experience luminosity), however after witnessing the progress of people it seems to us that those who went into anatta without the I AM realization tend to miss out the luminosity and intensity of luminosity. And then they will have to go through another phase. For those with I AM realization, the second stanza of anatta comes very easily, in fact the first aspect to become more apparent. Nowadays John and my opinion is that it is best to go through the I AM phase, then nondual and anatta..

There was also the worry that by leading people into the I AM, they can get stuck there. (As John Tan and Sim Pern Chong was stuck there for decades)

But I have shown that it is possible to progress rather quickly (in eight months) from I AM to anatta. So the being stuck is due to lack of right pointers and directions, not inherently an issue with I AM.
And the way to progress quickly is to be aware of the pitfalls of the I AM as I wrote in the AtR guide, and going along the four aspects of I AM and then nondual contemplations or two stanzas of anatta. If I kept reinforcing the pitfalls of I AM with wrong view, maybe I can get stuck there. Likewise for other phases, there are other pitfalls as well. Even after anatta, John Tan has at times told me to revisit the aspect of I AM. It is possible, even important, to integrate that quality and taste.)

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p.s. John also wrote in 2007,

"The understanding 'of arising as yuan (conditions)' must be factored to all aspects of our lives. Applying this insight to the six stages of my experiences, you must see them not as indications of stages at all. There are no higher or lower stages, all merely serves as conditions for ‘new insight’ to arise. A practitioner may start from training himself to ‘witness’ the empty nature of phenomena (stage 6) yet still having a clear distinction of observer and observed being dual; but the gradual loosening of ‘solidity’ of all internal or external phenomena having no inherent existence will slowly leads to the non-dual experience."

"Here the highlight must not only be the empty nature of ‘sound’ alone, that luminosity as ‘sound’ must similarly be emphasized. When we stripped-off the symbolic representation of ‘bird’, ‘chirping’, ‘outside’, ‘eyes-organ’, ‘ears-organs’, ‘senate reality’ and merely experience in bare, this is the meditative state of intuitively knowing that quality of being luminous in oneness. Oneness as there is nothing to divide when devoid of these symbolic layering. The depth of the crystal clarity of that pure experience – ‘chirping’ is not what language can convey. The point here is not to bring about a scientific study on the topic of qualia but to have a direct feel of the full absorption in the delight of that clear-luminosity of ‘sound’. It is the ‘depth and degree’ of absorptive-clarity yet non-staying that is most important; not the symbolic understanding of meanings.

It may be a good prompt at this juncture to ask "Is remaining ‘in the mode that is free of symbols’ the only way to experience non-duality?""

.....

Soh Wei Yu

Soh Wei Yu MS: good descriptions :)

As you are already having nondual taste of all phenomena as one's radiance, just let it unfold naturally, and intensity becomes clear when the center is completely severed in 'no cold and heat'*, and its intensity can further expand many-fold into an oceanic state (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/10/the-unbound-field-of-awareness.html).

John wrote to Pegembara in 2011:

"Not so much of becoming disillusioned; rather with the maturing of this view, the mind releases itself from any forms of 'holding'.
There are 2 additional points that I think are important:

1. Anatta is not Sunyata

2. Although whatever arises is empty of inherent essence, it must also be understood that it is vividly clear, present and luminous. The passing scent, the taste, the scenery, the arising sound, the arising thought...these magical appearances are themselves primordially pure, they are the Dharmakaya."

*No Cold or Heat:

Where There Is No Cold or Heat

A monk asked Tozan, “When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?”
Tozan said, “Why don’t you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?”
The monk said, “What is the place where there is no cold or heat?”
Tozan said, “When it’s cold, the cold kills you; when it’s hot, the heat kills you.”

This is not advice to “accept” your situation, as some commentators have suggested, but a direct expression of authentic practice and enlightenment. Master Tozan is not saying, “When cold, shiver; when hot, sweat,” nor is he saying, “When cold, put on a sweater; when hot, use a fan.” In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe. The heat kills you, and there is only heat in the whole universe. The fragrance of incense kills you, and there is only the fragrance of incense in the whole universe. The sound of the bell kills you, and there is only “boooong” in the whole universe...

~The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing, Ted Biringer

John Tan: The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space, water...
is the place where the earth, fire, wind, space and water kills “You” and fully shines as its own radiance, a complete taste of itself and fully itself.

I seem to be having some breakthroughs and insights into anatta but it is not so stable yet.

Continue contemplating until the insight of “always already so” arises and sinks in deeply into your mindstream.

See the comments and advices by John in the comment section of The Buddha on Non-Duality, focus on contemplating the first point below.

“At first 'effort' to focus on experiencing on the vividness of 'sensation' in the most immediate and direct way will remain. It will be 'concentrative' for some time before it turns effortless.

There are a few points I would like to share:

1. Insight that 'anatta' is a seal and not a stage must arise to further progress into the 'effortless' mode. That is, anatta is the ground of all experiences and has always been so, no I. In seeing, always only seen, in hearing always only sound and in thinking, always only thoughts. No effort required and never was there an 'I'.

2. It is better not to treat sensation as 'real' as the word 'real' in Buddhism carries a different meaning. It is rather a moment of vivid, luminous presence but nothing 'real'. It may be difficult to realise why is this important but it will become clearer in later phase of our progress.

3. Do go further into the aspect of dependent origination and emptiness to further 'purify' the experience of anatta. Not only is there no who, there is no where and when in all manifestation.

Whatever said are nothing authoritative. Just a sharing and happy Journey!”

“You need to understand the difference between insight and experience. What you are describing so far is an experience. To make it effortless you need to realise anatman as an insight.

When you practice vipassana, contemplating the two stanzas of anatta https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../on-anatta... and bahiya sutta along with direct taste of luminosity in no-mind until anatta is realized as always already so.

See: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../differentiati... , https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../no-mind-and... , https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../ajahn-amaro-on... including comments section , https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../transcript...

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../06/choosing.html

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../the-wind-is...

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../robert... ” – Soh, 2020

No Actor does not Imply No Action

This refers to a wrong understanding of anatta, prior to the direct realization of anatta. Wrong understanding includes the notion that “suffering” is caused by a real “sufferer”, “action” is caused by a real “actor/doer”, and hence if the doer dissolves there is no more action, or if there is suffering/action that implies there is a real sufferer/doer that is present and causing it (and when sufferer dissolves the suffering goes with it), etc. Or that because there is no sufferer, there is also no suffering (a nihilistic interpretation of no-self and emptiness).

"There never was a self. One must re-orientate oneself that it is functionality and action that give rise to [the sense of a] self/entity rather than [a real] agent giving rise to action. Therefore from anatta, we see Dependent Origination, cause and conditions, action, karma... unlike [the misunderstanding of] no-self therefore no dependent origination and causality. The former is non-substantialist view, the later is using substantialist self view to understand anatta (no-self)." - John Tan, 2015

“Buddhist teachings refer to this idea that an ultimate absence of identity somehow renders conventional activity and processes invalid as “nihilism” [uccedavāda].

A “self” is ultimately a secondary imputation that is attributed to a complex nexus of causal activity. By negating that imputation in a blanketed manner which calls into question and all processes that said “self” is attributed to, we only negate that surface level designation. However this does not resolve the causal nexus of afflictive activity that the designation is imputed onto.

In Buddhist teachings, the sense of selfhood is a byproduct of activity. Not the other way around.

In some “spiritual” approaches, such as neo-Advaita, they believe the imputation is primary and the activity is secondary. And so they only negate the imputation and then ask “who is there to do X?” or “who could have such and such realization?” or “there is no one who suffers because the self is a concept,” etc., but this only negates a surface level imputation and completely ignores the underlying factors that cause identification as a whole.

In contrast, the buddhadharma says that identity and identification in general is a process that is caused by afflictive action. The “self” as an imputation ie merely the very tip of the iceberg in terms of the activity that spawns identification and suffering. Therefore negating the self does not actually resolve the issue.

We agree that the self is a construct, and that selves are ultimately false, but we as practitioners of the buddhadharma also understand that there is underlying activity that manifests the self. That affliction must be resolved. Ignorance, grasping, etc., the afflictive chain of dependent origination that underlies selfhood.

The self does not create action. Action creates the self.

Therefore negating the self does not resolve affliction or the activity of dependent origination that creates the driving force of identification which binds us as sentient beings.

The process of bondage and the process of liberation in Buddhism are agentless action. Agentless activity. The agent is always secondary and is merely a useful designation that claims ownership. Therefore it is vital to understand there are causes and conditions that create samsara and the delusion of selfhood, and there is the undoing of those causes and conditions which leads to liberation.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

"No-self/Anatta is not about denying thinking, action, carrying water and chopping wood... and this is the key difference between genuine anatta insight from dualistic conceptual understanding. The very notion that "action" and "intention" implies, or necessitates, an "actor", and therefore for non-action the intentions and actions must also cease, is precisely using dualistic thinking to understanding anatta...

Action never required a self (in fact there never was a self or a doer apart from action to begin with: only a delusion of one), and action does not need to perpetuate the myth of a self. The myth of a self is not exactly dependent on action or lack thereof. Sure, action that arises out of the dualistic sense of actor/act where there is an "I" trying to modify or achieve "that" is a form of action produced by ignorance. But not all actions necessarily arise out of an underlying sense of duality. If all actions arise out of a sense of duality, then after awakening one will just die as he cannot even feed himself.

When one is operating with a dualistic way of understanding, one thinks that action implies a self that is doing an act, and one thinks that non-action implies that the self ends with the action. But genuine insight into non-action is simply the realization that never was there a real actor behind action, so there is always in acting just that action - whole being is only the total exertion of action, and this is always already the case but not realized. That is true non-action - there is no subject (actor) performing an act (object)."

- Soh, 2013, Non-Action

"Mere suffering is, not any sufferer is found
The deeds exist, but no performer of the deeds:
Nibbana is, but not the man that enters it,
The path is, but no wanderer is to be seen."

“No doer of the deeds is found,
No one whoever reaps their fruits,
Empty phenomena roll on,
This view alone is right and true.

No god, no Brahma, may be called,
The maker of this wheel of life,
Empty phenomena roll on,
Dependent on conditions all.

...

Everywhere, in all the realms of existence, the noble disciple sees only mental and corporeal phenomena kept going through the concatenation of causes and effects. No producer of the volitional act or kamma does he see apart from the kamma, no recipient of the kamma-result apart from the result. And he is well aware that wise men are using merely conventional language,when, with regard to a kammical act, they speak of a doer, or with regard to a kamma-result, they speak of the recipient of the result."

Visuddhimagga XIX.

- No Self, No Doer, Conditionality

John Tan:

“The logic that since there is no agency, hence no choice to be made is no different from "no sufferer, therefore no suffering".

This is not anatta insight.

What is seen through in anatta is the mistaken view that the conventional structure of "subject action object" represents reality when it is not. Action does not require an agent to initiate it. It is language that creates the confusion that nouns are required to set verbs into motion.

Therefore the action of choosing continues albeit no chooser.

"Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found;

The deeds are, but no doer of the deeds is there;

Nibbāna is, but not the man that enters it;

The path is, but no traveler on it is seen."

Related:

Alan Watts: Agent and Action

Investigation into Movement

Also, an enlightening conversation recently (thankfully with permission from Arcaya Malcolm to share this) in Arcaya Malcolm's facebook group:

"[Participant 1]
June 14 at 2:40 PM

I came across a passage in a book I'm reading which brings up how Nagarjuna often bases arguments on unstated and unproven premises and manipulates ambiguities in language to justify his arguments leading to criticisms of sophistry. How do later authors address this if they do at all?

One example from chap 3 of the MMK with the following 3 arguments:

"Vision cannot in anyway see itself. Now if it cannot see itself, how can it see other things?

"The example of fire is not adequate to establish vision. These have been refuted with the analysis of movement, past, future, and present" - refers to the refutation from chap 2

"When no vision occurs there is nothing to be called visions. How then can it be said: vision sees?"

The book brings up the following critcism respectively:

This is based on the assumption for objects to have certain functions it needs to apply the function to itself but this is not justified. A counter example being lamps illuminate themselves and others.

The argument from chap 2 depends on natural functions (movement, burning of fire, seeing of the eye, etc.) being predicated on the moment of time which it takes place, and when the non obtaining of time is established it leads to the non happening of the function. This is not justified.

Here Nagarjuna jumps from how seeing only occurs with a sense object to the occlusion the eye faculty can't see. The author distinguishes between "seeing independent of condition" and "seeing dependent of condition" so Nagarjuna really only negates the first one. And that negating the first is close to pointless since no one asserts seeing occurs irrespective of condition. The second is left alone.
6[...] and 5 others
17 Comments
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[Participant 2] What book is this from?
1

Like
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[Participant 1] Madhyamaka in China, the author was giving some background on Nagarjuna.
1

Like
· Reply · 1w

Malcolm Smith
Malcolm Smith Lamps do not illuminate themselves. Candrakirti shows this.
2

Like
· Reply · 1w

Malcolm Smith
Malcolm Smith Nāgārjuna is addressing the realist proposition, "the six senses perceive their objects because those sense and their objects intrinsically exist ." It is not his unstated premise, that is the purvapakṣa, the premise of the opponent. The opponent, in verse 1 of this chapter asserts the essential existence of the six āyatanas. The opponent is arguing that perception occurs because the objects of perception actually exist.
6

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Malcolm Smith
Malcolm Smith [Participant 1] "The argument from chap 2 depends on natural functions (movement, burning of fire, seeing of the eye, etc.) being predicated on the moment of time which it takes place, and when the non obtaining of time is established it leads to the non happening of the function. This is not justified."

Why?

Nāgārjuna shows two things in chapter two, one, he says that if there is a moving mover, this separates the agent from the action, and either the mover is not necessary or the moving is not necessary. It is redundant.

In common language we oftren saying things like "There is a burning fire." But since that is what a fire is (burning) there is no separate agent which is doing the burning, fire is burning.

On the other hand, when an action is not performed, no agent of that action can be said to exist. This is why he says "apart from something which has moved and has not moved, there is no moving mover." There is no mover with moving, etc.

This can be applied to all present tense gerundial agentive constructions, such as I am walking to town, the fire is burning, etc.

8

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[Participant 3] Malcolm Smith these are not agentive constructions, they are unaccusative (cf. "byed med") verbs, so of course no separate agent can be established. So what?

The example of the fire and the eye are likewise not convincing, because they just happen to describe natural functions, but this is not all that unaccusative verbs do. When you say "the cat falls down", you cannot say that "falling down" is what a cat "is", the same way you can with fire burning.

Like
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Malcolm Smith
Malcolm Smith [Participant 3] the point is aimed at the notion that there has to be a falling faller, a seeing seer, etc. it is fine to say there is a falling cat, but stupid to say the cat is a falling faller. The argument is aimed at that sort of naive premise.

For example, if eyes could see forms by nature, they should be able to forms in absence of an object of form, and so on.

But if the sight of forms cannot be found in the eyes, and not in the object, nor the eye consciousness, then none of them are sufficient to explain the act of seeing. Because of this, statements like the eyes are seers is just a convention, but isn’t really factual.

And it still applies in this way, apart from what has been seen and not been seen, there is no present seeing.
1

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· Reply · 1w · Edited"

Malcolm Smith
Malcolm Smith Any people make the mistake of thinking that nag has an obligation to do more than just deconstruct the purpaksa.”

- From his facebook group Ask the Ācārya https://www.facebook.com/groups/387338435166650/

Description

Who this group is for: people who wish to ask Ācārya Malcolm Smith questions about Dharma etc., and to converse with like-minded people. Being admitted to this group carries a commitment not to share content outside of the group.

Who this group is not for: People with pseudonyms; people who think one can practice Dzogchen, Mahāmudra, etc. without a guru; people who think psychedelics are useful on the Buddhist path; people who think they can mix Buddhadharma with nonbuddhist paths, etc.

Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh:

"When we say it's raining, we mean that raining is taking place. You don't need someone up above to perform the raining. It's not that there is the rain, and there is the one who causes the rain to fall. In fact, when you say the rain is falling, it's very funny, because if it weren't falling, it wouldn't be rain. In our way of speaking, we're used to having a subject and a verb. That's why we need the word "it" when we say, "it rains." "It" is the subject, the one who makes the rain possible. But, looking deeply, we don't need a "rainer," we just need the rain. Raining and the rain are the same. The formations of birds and the birds are the same -- there's no "self," no boss involved.

There's a mental formation called vitarka, "initial thought." When we use the verb "to think" in English, we need a subject of the verb: I think, you think, he thinks. But, really, you don't need a subject for a thought to be produced. Thinking without a thinker -- it's absolutely possible. To think is to think about something. To perceive is to perceive something. The perceiver and the perceived object that is perceived are one.

When Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am," his point was that if I think, there must be an "I" for thinking to be possible. When he made the declaration "I think," he believed that he could demonstrate that the "I" exists. We have the strong habit or believing in a self. But, observing very deeply, we can see that a thought does not need a thinker to be possible. There is no thinker behind the thinking -- there is just the thinking; that's enough.

Now, if Mr. Descartes were here, we might ask him, "Monsieur Descartes, you say, 'You think, therefore you are.' But what are you? You are your thinking. Thinking -- that's enough. Thinking manifests without the need of a self behind it."

Thinking without a thinker. Feeling without a feeler. What is our anger without our 'self'? This is the object of our meditation. All the fifty-one mental formations take place and manifest without a self behind them arranging for this to appear, and then for that to appear. Our mind consciousness is in the habit of basing itself on the idea of self, on manas. But we can meditate to be more aware of our store consciousness, where we keep the seeds of all those mental formations that are not currently manifesting in our mind.

When we meditate, we practice looking deeply in order to bring light and clarity into our way of seeing things. When

the vision of no-self is obtained, our delusion is removed. This is what we call transformation. In the Buddhist tradition, transformation is possible with deep understanding. The moment the vision of no-self is there, manas, the elusive notion of 'I am,' disintegrates, and we find ourselves enjoying, in this very moment, freedom and happiness."

- Choosing

“[3:29 PM, 6/25/2020] John Tan: Thought of how to explain the difference in anatta and advaita nihilism.
[3:40 PM, 6/25/2020] John Tan: When a person in ignorance, why is he so blinded? If there is no I, shouldn't him be already free?

Sentient being: if there is no I in ignorance, then you are therefore free.

Anatta: There is no I in ignorance, you are precisely THAT ignorance, therefore fully and entirely blinded.

What anatta insight is telling us is the "I" and "ignorance" are the same phenomenon. This also tells us that even when in ignorant, there is complete and effortless non-dual experience, anatta is a seal.

[2:52 PM, 6/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: The Beauty of Virtue

Thought is movement between “what is” and “what should be.” Thought is the time to cover that space, and as long as there is division between this and that psychologically, the movement is the time of thought. So thought is time as movement. Is there time as movement, as thought, when there is only observation of “what is”? That is, not observation as the observer and the observed, but only observation without the movement of going beyond “what is.” It is very important for the mind to understand this, because thought can create most marvelous images of what is sacred and holy, which all religions have done. All religions are based on thought. All religions are the organization of thought, in belief, in dogma, in rituals. So unless there is complete understanding of thought as time and movement, the mind cannot possibly go beyond itself.

We are trained, educated, drilled to change “what is” into “what should be,” the ideal, and that takes time. That whole movement of thought to cover the space between “what is” and “what should be” is the time to change “what is” into “what should be”—but the observer is the observed, therefore there is nothing to change, there is only “what is.” The observer doesn’t know what to do with “what is,” therefore he tries various methods to change “what is,” controls “what is,” tries to suppress “what is.” But the observer is the observed: the “what is” is the observer. Anger, jealousy, are also the observer; there isn’t jealousy separate from the observer—both are one. When there is no movement as thought in time to change “what is,” when thought perceives that there is no possibility of changing “what is,” then that which is—“what is”—ceases entirely, because the observer is the observed.

Go into this very deeply and you will see for yourself. It is really quite simple. If I dislike someone, the dislike is not different from the “me” or the “you.” The entity that dislikes is dislike itself; it is not separate. And when thought says, “I must get over my dislike,” then it is movement in time to get over that which actually is, which is created by thought. So the observer—the entity—and the thing called “dislike” are the same. Therefore there is complete immobility. It is not the immobility of being static, it is complete motionlessness and therefore complete silence. So time as movement, time as thought achieving a result, has come totally to an end, and therefore action is instantaneous. So the mind has laid the foundation and is free from disorder; and therefore there is the flowering and the beauty of virtue. In that foundation is the basis of relationship between you and another. In that relationship there is no activity of image; there is only relationship, not one image adjusting itself to the other image. There is only “what is” and not the changing of “what is.” The changing of “what is,” or transforming of “what is,” is the movement of thought in time.

When you have come to that point, the mind and the brain cells also become totally still. The brain which holds memories, experience, knowledge, can and must function in the field of the known. But now that mind, that brain, is free from the activity of time and thought. Then the mind is completely still. All this takes place without effort. All this must take place without any sense of discipline, control, which belong to disorder.

You know, what we are saying is totally different from what the gurus, the “masters,” the Zen philosophers say, because in this there is no authority, there is no following another. If you follow somebody, you are not only destroying yourself but also the other. A religious mind has no authority whatsoever. But it has intelligence and it applies that intelligence. In the world of action there is the authority of the scientist, the doctor, the man who teaches you how to drive, but otherwise there is no authority, there is no guru.

So, if you have gone as deeply as that, then the mind has established order in relationship, and understands the whole complex disorder of our daily lives. Out of the comprehension of that disorder, out of the awareness of it, in which there is no choice, comes the beauty of virtue, which is not cultivated, which is not brought about by thought. That virtue is love, order, and if the mind has established that with deep roots, it is immovable, unchangeable. And then you can inquire into the whole movement of time. Then the mind is completely still. There is no observer, there is no experiencer, there is no thinker.

There are various forms of sensory and extrasensory perception. Clairvoyance, healing, all kinds of things take place, but they are all secondary, and a mind that is really concerned with the discovery of what is truth, what is sacred, will never touch them.

The mind then is free to observe. Then there is that which man has sought through centuries, the unnameable, the timeless. And there is no verbal expression of it. The image that is created by thought completely and utterly ceases because there is no entity that wants to express it in words. Your mind can only discover it, or come upon it, when you have this strange thing called love, compassion, not only for your neighbor, but for the animals, the trees, for everything.

Then such a mind itself becomes sacred.

~ J Krishnamurti, 'This Light in Oneself: True Meditation'

[2:53 PM, 6/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: reminds me of what you said 'you are the ignorance'
[6:52 AM, 6/28/2020] John Tan: Yes”

Neo-Advaitic “No-Practice Doctrine” is Wrong and Unhelpful

This is related to “No Actor does not Imply No Action”

The Neo Advaitins, as well as some Buddhists these days, teach that you should not do any practices, since there is no one to do them and so on. That is based on the faulty premise the practices and actions require a doer, and that they are ineffective, or that they necessarily perpetuate the notion of a self or doer. That is lacking the discernment into conditionality, karmic conditionings, the role and relationships of path, view, experience, realization, fruition. It requires people with deep wisdom like Buddha, or like John Tan to be able to discern this.

From a conversation in 2010:

(4:24:08 PM) Thusness: the man with the cellphone...😛rather than seeing it as universe doing it...see that the deeper dispositions causing the frustration. see the subtle holding of pces. see that there is rigidity in holding. you know about the fox zen koan?

(4:28:31 PM) AEN: yea

(4:28:55 PM) Thusness: you know the importance of it? it is considered hard to penetrate even among the enlightened. 🙂

(4:29:45 PM) AEN: it’s talking about the importance of causality

(4:30:08 PM) Thusness: buddhism causality is the theory of conditionality. you must clearly see the causes and conditions. now if you are not trying to 'maintain' a state of non-dual presence, will the walkman cell phone pose as a problem? isn't that worse than a by passer that is not distracted by the cellphone?

(4:38:26 PM) AEN: yea

(4:39:30 PM) Thusness: if you do not see the cause of 'division', can there be non-dual and anatta experience? without the experience of "I AMness", your experience of non-dual and anatta will be different. 🙂

(4:40:37 PM) AEN: oic

(4:40:38 PM) AEN: how different

(4:40:58 PM) Thusness: very different in terms of intensity and realization. most will skew towards first stanza. the directness and immediacy is also different. the experience will re-surface if you practice non-dual dropping, but not by way of one-pointedness concentration

(4:43:41 PM) Thusness: how is your PCEs sustained?

(4:46:03 PM) AEN: yeah its like those who practice vipassana or mctb focuses on the first stanza right

(4:46:14 PM) AEN: hmm.. via dropping like you said. theres no concentration needed cos everything is by nature nondual already, just the clinging to a sense of self obscuring the direct perception

(4:47:46 PM) AEN: bahiya sutta is a mix of both stanzas right

(4:48:05 PM) Thusness: by clear seeing, by penetrating the cause and conditions, by letting go non-dually...

(4:48:22 PM) Thusness: bahiya sutta yes...very deep, clear and precise. 🙂

(4:49:06 PM) AEN: through contemplating bahiya sutta experientially I realised what it mean which I later wrote in the article... I think its a v important sutta

(4:49:19 PM) Thusness: yes. therefore I do not want you to misunderstand and falls into fox zen. there must be clear understanding of the supporting conditions... not everything is the universe causing it... you have no choice...kok your head

(4:50:34 PM) AEN: haha

(4:50:50 PM) Thusness: in fact that is one of the disease of non-dual and desync of views

(4:51:00 PM) AEN: so there is choice? there is intentions right and choice

(4:51:11 PM) Thusness: yes

(4:51:14 PM) AEN: ic..

(4:51:16 PM) Thusness: there is no control. there is influences of the outcome. no perfect control... it is no different from having a self. except that there is no division. no someone standing out apart from the flow of phenomenality. the inter-dependencies are too complex and subtle to penetrate, and this moment of whatever arises are the result of such dependencies. chanting has its effect. do merit has its effect. insights are transformational. the path of practice has their effect. self enquiry help you to realize "I AM". no-self lead you to realize non-division and anatta. allow the direct experience of the transient. what you wrote and your summary provide you the penetrating insight of non-duality and insight into anatta. how is it that there is no way to impact? it just does not manifesting the way the dualistic and inherent mind perceive it to be. means reality is not what it seems to be. not the way dualistic and inherent mind sees it. DO *(dependent origination)* and emptiness is the way to correctly understand it

(5:00:32 PM) AEN: oic.. yeah everything impacts everything... even right view is important and the right practice... the notion that 'there’s nothing to do for enlightenment' or that enlightenment is some random event is really off the mark

(5:02:31 PM) Thusness: if you practice chanting a billion times, your consciousness in the 3 states will be affected. mere will in the conscious state will not be able to stop the momentum . that is self view...get it?

(5:05:18 PM) AEN: yeah

(5:05:28 PM) Thusness: even in deep dreamless sleep

(5:05:47 PM) AEN: yea... what do you mean by even in deep dreamless sleep

(5:06:14 PM) Thusness: even in deep dreamless sleep... Your mind/body rhythm, heart beats are affected by this practice. if penetrate anatta deeply...from moment to moment...thoroughly letting go of self and grasping and vivid presence, how is it that such practice will not affect the 3 states?

(5:14:39 PM) AEN: hmm... but in deep dreamless sleep if there is no conscious awareness how can there be an ongoing practice?

(5:16:26 PM) Thusness: the entire movement is not a matter of conscious awareness. the momentum continues...the body, the cells are imprinted too. 😛 much like your deep held attachments. all inter-penetrates. your body can contract unnecessarily. 😛 so you may have the experience but you have to refine your understanding. there are still some good pointers. when you practice dropping, it will help. when your insight deepens, it will help. so the mind can be clear. thoughts create fear... the mind engages in story has fear this is true. and being thoughtless, fear does not arise at that moment when we do away with thoughts and stop engaging in stories. but the cause is the 'attachment'. if the holding is there, there is no overcoming of the problem, get it? knowing that it is just a thought, engaging in stories helps as a form of practice... ultimately, that deep held tendency must be relinquished.

(5:30:25 PM) AEN: ic.. so you mean the main focus is not thoughtlessness but relinquishing the tendency of holding? and that’s by insight and dropping?

(5:31:16 PM) Thusness: yes. and because there is no holding, no attachment, there is thoughtlessness. as I said certain teachings are good to a certain point... after you arise the insight, you have to have other pointers. before that, it can be helpful to get you there...they are good 'supporting conditions'. but some of the expressions are beautiful. Sometimes just a few of these beautiful phrases help to articulate expressions... and that is what I look for because it is so hard to express.

(5:35:39 PM) AEN: ic.. "Learned Audience, when we use Prajna for introspection we are illumined within and without, and in a position to know our own mind. To know our mind is to obtain liberation. To obtain liberation is to attain Samadhi of Prajna, which is 'thoughtlessness'. What is 'thoughtlessness'? 'Thoughtlessness' is to see and to know all Dharmas (things) with a mind free from attachment. When in use it pervades everywhere, and yet it sticks nowhere. What we have to do is to purify our mind so that the six vijnanas (aspects of consciousness) , in passing through the six gates (sense organs) will neither be defiled by nor attached to the six sense-objects. When our mind works freely without any hindrance, and is at liberty to 'come' or to 'go', we attain Samadhi of Prajna, or liberation. Such a state is called the function of 'thoughtlessness'. But to refrain from thinking of anything, so that all thoughts are suppressed, is to be Dharma-ridden, and this is an erroneous view."

(5:36:27 PM) AEN: - hui neng

(5:37:53 PM) Thusness: yes

“And to clarify, I only harp on this issue like I do because I used to carry the same view: that everything is already perfect... there's nothing to realize... there's no one here to do anything... there's no such thing as "correct" or

"incorrect"... or that concepts were the enemy, and so on, and so on, and so on. All the same narratives you see being spun by most neo-nondual teachers and systems. I remember I used to argue with a friend/mentor all the time about how he doesn't get it, and he's just fooling himself with practice and so on. And I used to cite the same quotations from Longchenpa and others that were speaking from the point of view of the ultimate, and I (in my delusion) provided them as proof that I was correct etc.

Then one day that changed, and I experientially tasted what all of these masters are pointing to. And I was shown directly that I had been wrong, and that was very humbling.

That made these teachings real for me. And surprisingly, instead of continuing to reject practice, and all of these other aspects of these systems that I had previously thought to be extraneous and a waste of time... I saw their value and their place for the first time. It became clear how and why they are applied, where they fit into the scheme of things... and I saw the sheer wisdom behind the structures that I had once mistakenly rejected.

So I only speak out against those who attempt to propagate the same mistakes because I've been there. I was so certain that I was right, and that I "got it", and that others didn't understand. And I was so wrong... unbelievably wrong.

I'm no teacher or messiah, I don't have a superiority complex or have some strange need to be "right", it's nothing like that. I simply speak out because when I see others who appear to be passionate about these teachings, making the same mistakes I made, I see myself, I can't help but to want to say "hey, it really isn't that way." And if all I accomplish is at least planting some shred of a seed of a possibility that X person may think twice and consider being open to the fact that they don't have it completely figured out, then that is good enough for me. If not, that is alright too, but at least I can say I tried.....” – Kyle Dixon

“Kyle Dixon: Stian, Mr. J is implying that there is nothing to do, because all notions of 'anything to do', 'emptiness', 'right view', 'wrong view', 'ignorance', 'defilement' etc., are nothing more than concepts which arise and fall within the space of 'awareness' which cannot be improved upon or defiled... that is his view he is proposing. I beg to differ... to me this view is nothing more than a license for stagnation and complacency which only serves to perpetuate the issue. It is a false sense of security that one has already 'arrived' so to speak.

The quote applies to Mr. J, because he claims precisely what Jigme Lingpa is describing in that statement to be true, and did so directly above that quotation: Jackson's view being, nothing need be done, because all concepts (including those of the dharma such as emptiness etc.), are nothing more than thoughts which arise in what is already complete, as expressions of what is already complete. His logic therefore being, there is no need to even entertain such notions, one is already innately realized. Jigme Lingpa is stating that such a notion is an incorrect view which actually severs one from the profound dharma. Mr. J’s assertion that 'nothing needs fixin' is a view he has touted for a very long time now, it is very unskillful and misleading.
Yesterday at 1:41pm · Like

Mr. J: My view Kyle, is not that "nothing need be done". Bringing an end to conceptualizing is a huge task. Buddha stated "conceptualizing is a cancer". It is the sole source of samsara. If the cause of samsara ceases we only have nirvana

as experience. However when that task has come to completion, then we know the space in which Nagarjuna lived along with all the masters of the Zen tradtion.
Yesterday at 1:48pm · Like

Kyle Dixon: Stian, Yes, right and wrong should surely be understood as a necessary and indispensable duality when it comes to the dharma. Right view is that which will lead to realization, wrong view is that which will perpetuate delusion.

Right and wrong are conventional as well, any conceptual structure we are implementing here is conventional.

'Full' can only be a conventional designation, the ultimate nature of 'full' is it's emptiness.
Yesterday at 1:51pm · Like · 1

Kyle Dixon: It's nothing more than a task that requires skillful recognition. At any rate though, it isn't simply a case of ending conceptualization... only conceptualization rejects conceptualization.
Yesterday at 1:53pm · Like · 1”

To reject practice is the path of fools - Longchenpa

Longchenpa on Nihilism

From Finding Rest in the Nature of Mind.

> Those who scorn the law of karmic cause and fruit
> Are students of the nihilist view outside the Dharma.
> They rely on the thought that all is void;
> They fall in the extreme of nothingness

And go from higher to lower states.
They have embarked on an evil path
And from the evil destinies will have no freedom,
Casting happy states of being far away.

”The law of karmic cause and fruit,
Compassion and the gathering of merit -
All this is but provisional teaching fit for children:
Enlightenment will not be gained thereby.
Great yogis should remain without intentional action.
They should meditate upon reality that is like space.
Such is the definitive instruction.”
The view of those who speak like this
Of all views is the most nihilist:
They have embraced the lowest of all paths.
How strange is this!
They want a fruit but have annulled its cause.

If reality is but a space-like void,
What need is there to meditate?
And if it is not so, then even if one meditates
Such efforts are to no avail.
If meditation on mere voidness leads to liberation,
Even those with minds completely blank
Attain enlightenment!
But since those people have asserted meditation,
Cause and its result they thus establish!
Throw far away such faulty paths as these!

The true, authentic path asserts
The arising in dependence of both cause and fruit,
The natural union of skillful means and wisdom.
Through the causality of nonexistent but appearing acts,
Through meditation on the nonexistent but appearing path,
The fruit is gained, appearing and yet nonexistent;
And for the sake of nonexistent but appearing beings,
Enlightened acts, appearing and yet nonexistent, manifest.
Such is pure causality’s profound interdependence.

This is the essential pith
Of all the Sutra texts whose meaning is definitive
And indeed of all the tantras.
Through the joining of the two accumulations,
The generation and completion stages,
Perfect buddhahood is swiftly gained.

Thus all the causal processes
Whereby samsara is contrived should be abandoned,
And all acts that are the cause of liberation
Should be earnestly performed.
High position in samsara
And the final excellence of buddhahood
Will speedily be gained.

- Finding Rest in the Nature of Mind (vol 1)

Also by Longchenpa:

"To reject practice by saying, ‘it is conceptual!’ is the path of fools. A tendency of the inexperienced and something to be avoided.”
— Longchenpa

Din Robinson
"It is astonishing to expect the result while abandoning the cause."
Isn't the cause always grasping (from the point of view of the separate self... of someone who exists in time and space and needs to know in order to navigate this existence) ?

Soh Wei Yu
Din Robinson The cause is referring to the two accumulations of merit and wisdom.

Longchenpa:

“The Fifteenth Word of Advice

Proffering mindless talk on emptiness and disregarding cause and effect,
You may think that non-action is the ultimate point of the Teaching;
Yet to abandon the two accumulations will destroy the good fortune of spiritual practice.
Integrate them both! This is my advice from the heart.”

John Tan wrote in 2022:

“As for Andre and Yin Ling conversations,:
No, for all practice purposes from top to bottom, karma is unerring and unfailing in all schools for both gelug or non-gelug, whether Tibetan or Chinese buddhism.
Even in direct path traditions, zen for example, we have the famous Baizhang fox koan that a mistake of saying not subject to karma led to 500 lives reborn as a fox. In mahamudra we have Milarepa undergoing tremendous hardship due to immense negative karma. In dzogchen we have Longchenpa warning against that too in his poem resting in mind's nature:
44. “The law of karmic cause and fruit, Compassion and the gathering of merit —
All this is but provisional teaching fit for children:
Enlightenment will not be gained thereby.
Great yogis should remain without intentioned action.
They should meditate upon reality that is like space.
Such is the definitive instruction.”
The view of those who speak like this Is of all views the most nihilist: They have embraced the lowest of all paths. How strange this is! They want a fruit but have annulled its cause.
46.
The true, authentic path asserts
The arising in dependence of both cause and fruit,
The natural union of skillful means and wisdom.
Through the causality of nonexistent but appearing acts,
Through meditation on the nonexistent but appearing path,
The fruit is gained, appearing and yet nonexistent;
And for the sake of nonexistent but appearing beings,
Enlightened acts, appearing and yet nonexistent, manifest.
Such is pure causality’s profound interdependence.
This is the essential pith
Of all the sūtra texts whose meaning is definitive
And indeed of all the tantras.
Through the joining of the two accumulations,
The generation and perfection stages,
Perfect buddhahood is swiftly gained.
John Tan wrote:
If Padmasambhava that can cast hand and foot prints on the rocks also take karma seriously, we just have to know and take it seriously that karma as action of body, speech and mind have consequent and bear fruit.”

Padmasambhava:

“Just as is the case with the sesame seed being the cause of the oil and the milk being the cause of butter,

But where the oil is not obtained without pressing and the butter is not obtained without churning,
So all sentient beings, even though they possess the actual essence of Buddhahood,
Will not realize Buddhahood without engaging in practice.

If he practices, then even a cowherd can realize liberation.

Even though he does not know the explanation, he can systematically establish himself in the experience of it.

(For example) when one has had the experience of actually tasting sugar in one's own mouth,
one does not need to have that taste explained by someone else.” - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../self-liberation...

Acarya Malcolm:

“That does not matter. Let's say you have a house, and in your house is a million dollars. If you never discover the million dollars or it is never shown to you, you will have a million dollars and never know it. Likewise, unless those buddha qualities are discovered by you in a direct perception, or pointed out to you, even if you have them, they are of no use to you.

As far as Dzogchen view goes, such qualities exist in the form of potential only. The analogy Longchenpa uses is that even though you may not need to gather the two accumulations ultimately in order to possess the kāyas and wisdoms, practicing the two accumulations is like polishing a dirty gem. One is not really adding anything new, but instead one is revealing what is already there, but hidden from ordinary sight.”

"Dzogchen teaching make a clear distinction between the basis (the time of non-realization) and the result.

The real issue which causes argument is whether tathagatāgabha, a.k.a., the dharmakāya at the time of the basis, is something that is naturally perfected or something which requires development. In general, the Sakyapas for example argue that the natural perfection of the qualities of awakening in the person does not conflict with transformation in the same way the natural presence of the quality in milk which produces butter does not mitigate or render unnecessary the process of transformation which produces butter (churning). Longchenpa for example argues that while the two accumulations have always been perfected, they need to be reaccumulated in the same sense that a gem that has been lost in a swamp needs to be polished in order to restore its former luster."

Soh Wei Yu
Din Robinson

As for the so called accumulation of wisdom, you can take it to mean rigpa/vidyā (knowledge) achieving its full measure and maturity. In Dzogchen teachings there is the unripened rigpa, which is the mere recognition of clarity, the unfabricated Instant Presence (that sometimes John Tan and I calls the "I AM realization"), and then rigpa/vidyā ripens with the recognition of selflessness and emptiness.

As Kyle Dixon pointed out before:

"The total realization of emptiness does not then occur until the third vision, which is called “the full measure of vidyā” because at that time, upon realizing emptiness and non-arising, our knowledge [vidyā] of phenomena is complete, and has reached its “full measure.”"

"We don’t have any misunderstanding. Again this is rhetoric versus reality, up until the third vision, “emptiness” is obscured and therefore at the time of direct introduction it is merely rhetorical. The nature of mind, as non-dual clarity and emptiness is not truly known until the third vision, again per Longchenpa, per Khenpo Ngachung, etc., not something I have made up. What do we generally recognize in direct introduction? We recognize clarity [gsal ba], and the aspect of vidyā that is concomitant with that clarity. Vidyā is then what carries our practice, but vidyā is not the citta dharmatā, the nature of mind.

This is why the first two visions are likened to śamatha, and the last two are likened to vipaśyanā."

And as to the nature of this prajna/gnosis/wisdom of emptiness, Kyle Dixon wrote:

"Raw awareness is called vijñāna in unrealized sentient beings, which is dualistic and comprised of a threefold division of sensory faculty [eye], sense function [sight] and sensory object [visual appearances].

In everyday people, even if conceptualization is absent, vijñāna is still experienced as dualistic because we feel we remain in an internal reference point and that objects are “over there” at a distance.

Through practice however we have the opportunity to experientially realize emptiness, and when emptiness is realized, vijñāna reverts to its natural state as jñāna. Jñāna is a non-dual modality of cognition where the inner reference point and external objects are realized to be false."

"Selflessness means there is ultimately no actual subject, which means there is no actual internal reference point that is apprehending sensory phenomena.

In describing this simply it means through your practice you will hopefully, eventually, awaken to recognize that there is no actual seer of sights, no hearer of sounds, and so on. The feeling of an internal seer or hearer, etc., is a useful but false construct that is created and fortified by various causes and conditions.

We suffer when we cling to this construct and think it is actually real. Recognition of the actual nature of that construct is liberating and freeing."

Labels: Ācārya Malcolm Smith, Anatta, Dzogchen, Emptiness, Kyle Dixon, Longchenpa 0 comments | |

No-Self is Not Associated with a State of No Thoughts

"The association of anatta (no-self) to the cessation of thoughts is due to a lack of insight that anatta is a seal, not a stage of attainment. In thinking there are always only thoughts, no thinker. In fact it is the realization that the continual arising and ceasing of thoughts without a thinker that is precious. The 2 important qualities that must be experienced are non-dual and spontaneity. Thoughts can slow down or even completely ceased but it has nothing to do with the insight of anatta."

- John Tan, 2009

“[commenting on some posts misinterpreting freedom as a state of thoughtlessness]

[9:51 PM, 9/15/2020] John Tan: I dunno what to say and dont want to comment. It is just seeing through reification that results in pristineness of appearance free from imputations... that is thought free wakefulness. There is clear intuitive discernment that is boundless and spontaneously free.
[9:53 PM, 9/15/2020] John Tan: One should first have the experiential insight of anatta as it is the exhaustion of the background self as the reified construct. To just say free of thoughts or to say it is a blank state that one can't differentiate left from right is just nonsense and pure ignorance.
[9:55 PM, 9/15/2020] John Tan: I think even taoism i ching has more clarity if understood correctly.
[9:57 PM, 9/15/2020] John Tan: Buddhism provides such clarity but I just don't understand why is it presented or misunderstood to this extent... maybe I am wrong...lol.
[9:59 PM, 9/15/2020] John Tan: But since I am out of all these idle talks, I just don't want people to disturb me unless condition is there. No point to keep engaging in fruitless idle talk. You too, be sincere and practice.”

"Pure clarity has a strict no-face - the face of non-conceptuality.
Empty clarity has a thousand faces, every face is brilliance and new."

- John Tan, 2014

Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, Clarifying the Natural State:

"At this moment, allow a feisty thought, such as delight, to take form. The very moment it vividly occurs, look directly into its identity from within the state of aware emptiness.

"Now, is this thought the intangible and naked state of aware emptiness? Or is it absolutely no different from the identity of innate mind-essence itself? Look!"

Let the meditator look for a short while.

The meditator may say, "It is the aware emptiness. There seems to be no difference." If so, ask:

"Is it an aware emptiness after the thought has dissolved? Or is it an aware emptiness by driving away the thought from meditation? Or, is the vividness of the thought itself an aware emptiness?"

If the meditator says it is like one of the first two cases, he had not cleared up the former uncertainties and should therefore be set to resolve this for a few days.

On the other hand, if he personally experiences it to be like the latter case, he has seen identity of thought and can therefore be given the following pointing-out instruction:

"When you look into a thought's identity, without having to dissolve the thought and without having to force it out by meditation, the vividness of the thought is itself the indescribable and naked state of aware emptiness. We call this seeing the natural face of innate thought or thought dawns as dharmakaya.

"Previously, when you determined the thought's identity and when you investigated the calm and the moving mind, you found that there was nothing other than this intangible single mind that is a self-knowing, natural awareness. It is just like the analogy of water and waves.”

Mahamudra teacher Gharwang Rinpoche said,

“Understanding these qualities of the mind—its essence, nature, and characteristics—is fundamental to the features of mahāmudrā practice. For example, in mahāmudrā practice, you may encounter the instruction to not abandon thoughts. This might sound very strange to meditators from other traditions, but if you really understand the nature of the mind, then you will understand the profundity of this instruction. Thoughts are not harmful things in and of themselves. The final goal of mahāmudrā practice is not the cessation of all thoughts. This is not something that we strive for. It is said in the mahāmudrā tradition the essence of thought is the dharmakāya, the truth body of a buddha. So, in a certain sense, practicing with the aim to abandon thought would be like aiming to abandon the dharmakāya. In fact, many mahāmudrā masters say that when thoughts arise, they feel so happy and joyful because, for them, more thoughts means more opportunity to experience the dharmakāya.” - Mahamudra: A Practical Guide by Zurmang Gharwang Rinpoche

"Session Start: Monday, September 22, 2008

(12:31 PM) AEN: hi i replied you just now
(12:31 PM) AEN: i mean forum
(12:54 PM) Thusness: don't talk about effortless and spontaneity
(12:54 PM) Thusness: if we look at Isis question, why is it so?
(12:54 PM) Thusness: why is there fear and phobia?
(12:55 PM) Thusness: What is mind?
(12:56 PM) AEN: bcos of past experiences right
(12:56 PM) AEN: like something happened before
(12:56 PM) AEN: and so when he/she experience something (like dog)
(12:57 PM) AEN: then he/she will react through conditioned thinking
(12:57 PM) AEN: so give rise to fear
(12:57 PM) Thusness: you are using logical reasoning
(12:57 PM) AEN: its like habitual reaction
(12:58 PM) AEN: or karmic propensity?
(12:58 PM) Thusness: all experiences that resulted has just one impact, they becomes imprints
(12:58 PM) AEN: oic
(12:58 PM) Thusness: so what is mind?
(12:58 PM) AEN: imprints and mental activities?
(12:58 PM) Thusness: you must feel it
(12:59 PM) Thusness: it is not an entity...
(12:59 PM) Thusness: it is a tendency
(12:59 PM) Thusness: that is not as an entity...u still have that sensation as if it is a Witness, an entity because you cannot feel this truth yet.
(1:00 PM) Thusness: can you see that mind As an arising tendency
(1:01 PM) AEN: the other day when meditating i had a sense suddenly that my entire mind is just tendencies arising, and there is like no thinker
(1:01 PM) Thusness: yes
(1:02 PM) Thusness: you must first feel this truth with your entire being
(1:02 PM) Thusness: like what Jeff Foster said, 'YOU' are just an arising thought
(1:02 PM) AEN: oic
(1:02 PM) Thusness: don't worry too much how it arises and how it subsides
(1:03 PM) Thusness: for now, you must see 'what is'
(1:03 PM) Thusness: a thought arises, then subsides
(1:03 PM) Thusness: then sound, then subsides
(1:03 PM) Thusness: then another thought arises
(1:04 PM) Thusness: what is thought?
(1:04 PM) AEN: just thought lor

(1:04 PM) AEN: awareness?
(1:04 PM) Thusness: no good
(1:04 PM) AEN: its like a kind of phenomena just like sound, sight, etc
(1:05 PM) AEN: but a different kind
(1:05 PM) Thusness: very good
(1:05 PM) Thusness: very good. 🙄
(1:05 PM) Thusness: what sort of phenomena?
(1:05 PM) AEN: dunnu how to describe it leh
(1:05 PM) AEN: mental phenomena?
(1:05 PM) Thusness: haha...
(1:05 PM) Thusness: yes what is it like?
(1:06 PM) AEN: images recalled, mental reasoning, arising in the mind?
(1:07 PM) Thusness: yes
(1:07 PM) AEN: words, etc
(1:07 PM) Thusness: but what that is more important, it is a 'knowing' or 'luminous' phenomenon
(1:07 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:08 PM) Thusness: an arising thought, then another arising thought
(1:08 PM) AEN: oic..
(1:08 PM) Thusness: each thought is 'luminous'
(1:08 PM) Thusness: first you must know this
(1:08 PM) Thusness: but if you see it from all previous experiences, you 'see' differently.
(1:09 PM) Thusness: what is seen is 'An Eternal Witness' sort of experience.
(1:09 PM) Thusness: is it not true?
(1:10 PM) AEN: yea
(1:10 PM) AEN: and theres a subtle tendency to push away all thoughts rather than simple see everything as it is
(1:10 PM) AEN: or rather
(1:10 PM) AEN: attempt to be the background awareness
(1:10 PM) Thusness: yes the tendency to push, to relate to a 'center' a source
(1:10 PM) Thusness: to be a container, a background
(1:11 PM) Thusness: you must feel the differences
(1:11 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:12 PM) Thusness: it is just a tendency to relate back to a source and refuses to 'see' what is.
(1:13 PM) Thusness: every arising of a thought carries with it deeply rooted imprints
(1:13 PM) Thusness: that 'blinds'
(1:13 PM) AEN: oic..
(1:14 PM) AEN: and the eternal witness is the thought of what is and what isnt awareness right, then becomes a tendency
(1:14 PM) AEN: to sink back to a center
(1:14 PM) Thusness: yes

(1:14 PM) Thusness: but first you must understand 'thought'
(1:14 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:15 PM) Thusness: a thought is luminous
(1:15 PM) Thusness: a luminous arising mental phenomena
(1:15 PM) AEN: oic..
(1:15 PM) Thusness: isn't it?
(1:16 PM) AEN: yes
(1:16 PM) Thusness: besides that what else? Isn't it always so?
(1:16 PM) Thusness: 'You are just an arising thought'
(1:17 PM) Thusness: a luminous thought at this moment 'looking' back, relating
(1:17 PM) Thusness: pondering
(1:17 PM) Thusness: in thinking, there is only thoughts
(1:17 PM) AEN: oic..
(1:17 PM) Thusness: now meditate on the stanza
(1:18 PM) Thusness: in thinking there is only thought
(1:18 PM) Thusness: in hearing, there is only sound
(1:18 PM) Thusness: just this two lines is enough
(1:19 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:21 PM) AEN: so whenever thoughts, tendency arise, we should just experience the thought as it is
(1:21 PM) AEN: as luminous
(1:21 PM) Thusness: no
(1:22 PM) Thusness: you must first understand clearly what is meant by no-self
(1:23 PM) Thusness: but know what is thought first.
(1:23 PM) Thusness: then understand anatta
(1:23 PM) AEN: oic..
(1:31 PM) Thusness: What is the different between in 'thinking, no thinker' and in thinking, only thoughts?
(1:31 PM) AEN: the luminosity of the thought is not thoroughly experienced even though there is insight into no split?
(1:31 PM) AEN: i dunno
(1:32 PM) Thusness: until you understand, then tell me.
(1:32 PM) Thusness: 😜
(1:32 PM) AEN: lol ok
(1:35 PM) AEN: in thinking, only thought, means each thought is discrete and complete?
(1:35 PM) AEN: no linking
(1:37 PM) AEN: before that there is still chaining of one thought with another?
(1:39 PM) Thusness: okie..so so only...anyway you have not understood the real essence of being unsupported, discrete and complete yet.
(1:40 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:40 PM) Thusness: just meditate on the first 2 lines : in thinking, just thoughts and in hearing, just sound

(1:40 PM) AEN: ok"

“To summarise, thoughts are buddha nature. They are not the problem. The problem is due to ignorance it is misconstrued that thoughts necessitate a thinker or there is a thinker, agent, or watcher behind thoughts. In thinking there is only thoughts, no thinker. Thoughts are empty and self luminous. That is buddha nature and same goes for all other senses。” – Soh, 2022

No-Self is Not Pre-Determinism

(This issue is not peculiar to Stage 5 but can be present the moment one has glimpses or experiences of the non-doership aspect of no-self, even if one has not yet reached Stage 1)

There is a kind of pathology or danger in various kinds of insights because they are partial and one may not have yet seen the complete picture. As you may have seen in my recent discussions, the pathology or danger in non-doership is that one will fall into a kind of extreme deterministic thinking - that somehow because there is no doer, nothing can/should be done about things. This leads to a very passive attitude to things, or rather, one is restricted to experiencing no-self in a passive way (of merely letting experience happen in non-doership), one which prevents the experience of non-dual in action/activities via complete non-dual engagement, involvement, incorporating intentions, and later going into total exertion. (Also non-doership does not imply one has arisen non-dual insight)

On the disease of non-doership, John Tan said:

“Nihilistic tendencies arise when the insight of anatta is skewed towards the no-doership aspect. The happening by itself must be correctly understood. It appears that things are accomplished by doing nothing but in actual case it is things get done due to ripening of action and conditions.

So the lack of self-nature does not imply nothing needs be done or nothing can be done. That is one extreme. At the other end of extreme is the self-nature of perfect control of what one wills, one gets. Both are seen to be false. Action + conditions leads to effect.”

“As to the specifics of your question I’m not sure, but here are a few major differences between classical “determinism” and Buddhist karmic causality:

Determinism proper necessarily involves inherently existent causes giving rise to inherently existent effects in a unilateral manner.

Karmic cause and effect in the context of the buddhadharma is only valid conventionally, and since every cause is an effect and every effect a cause, they are, in a coarse sense, bilateral in nature.

Karma can be “determined” in a certain sense, but since karma takes direction from intention, change can occur, certain results can be averted, suffering can be mitigated and ideally uprooted altogether.” - Kyle Dixon, 2019

“Kyle Dixon Dante Rosati we gave volition [cetana], and can direct that volition freely.

Of course we are subject to our karma, but it is not as rigidly deterministic as you suggest.
1

-

  Kyle Dixon Yes, we “have,” possess, volition. And are capable of directing it where we choose.
  - Like
  - · Reply
  - · 17h
-

  Kyle Dixon Life is not a fully automated process in the sense that you are like a helpless leaf being blown around by the wind, is the point.

  You can make choices and direct volition.
-

  Kyle Dixon Eric Aksunah I don’t know the specifics.

  I just recall Malcolm once said we don’t have “free will” because such a principle implies a rational agent, and we are still subject to karma. Nevertheless, we can direct our volition and intention in specific directions, such as following the path.

  1
  - Like
  - · Reply
  - · 15h

“ - Kyle Dixon, 2020

“Determinism would require truly established causes giving rise to established effects in a unilateral manner, thus based on that buddhadharma is not deterministic. Causes are only conventional, and cause and effect are bilateral dependencies. Like Āryadeva says, we might think the father is the cause of the child, but the child is also the cause of the father.

Re free will, we Buddhists acknowledge volition [cetana] but only conventionally. Free will is actually a monotheist principle used to reconcile sin with a creator deity. Thus free will proper is not a thing in Buddhism. Further, free will requires a rational agent which buddhadharma does not uphold. And actually we negate such a thing. As such we have conventional volition but are still subject to karma.” – Kyle Dixon, 2022

“Author: Astus
Date: Sat Jul 20, 2024 4:42 AM
Title: Re: Free Will?
Content:
Beings are the makers and heirs of their own actions. If they were not the makers, that would be determinism. If they were not the heirs, that would be indeterminism. Such denial of cause and effect is called wrong view (e.g. https://suttacentral.net/an3.119/en/sujato), and is based on the mistaken belief in a self (https://suttacentral.net/sn24.5/en/sujato).

Author: Astus
Date: Fri Jul 19, 2024 3:59 AM
Title: Re: Free Will?
Content:
The Buddha has rejected both determinism and indeterminism (https://suttacentral.net/an3.61/en/sujato), and he practically ridiculed those who denied autonomy in their actions (https://suttacentral.net/an6.38/en/sujato). Naturally, what's been done is done, but currently one chooses how to act (https://suttacentral.net/sn35.146/en/sujato), therefore bad habits can be rectified (https://suttacentral.net/sn42.8/en/sujato), and even the consequences of past actions can be mitigated (https://suttacentral.net/an3.100/en/sujato).”

Buddha's teaching: https://suttacentral.net/an6.38/en/sujato?lang=en&layout=plain&reference=none&notes=asterisk&highlight=false&script=latin

- Numbered Discourses 6.38
- 4. Deities

“One’s Own Volition

Then a certain brahmin went up to the Buddha, and exchanged greetings with him. When the greetings and polite conversation were over, he sat down to one side and said to the Buddha:
“Mister Gotama, this is my doctrine and view: One does not act of one’s own volition, nor does one act of another’s volition.”
“Brahmin, may I never see or hear of anyone holding such a doctrine or view! How on earth can someone who comes and goes on his own say that one does not act of one’s own volition, nor does one act of another’s volition?
What do you think, brahmin, is there an element of initiative?”
“Yes, sir.”

“Since this is so, do we find sentient beings who initiate activity?”
“Yes, sir.”
“Since there is an element of initiative, and sentient beings who initiate activity are found, sentient beings act of their own volition or that of another.
What do you think, brahmin, is there an element of persistence ... exertion ... strength ... endurance ... energy?”
“Yes, sir.”
“Since this is so, do we find sentient beings who have energy?”
“Yes, sir.”
“Since there is an element of energy, and sentient beings who have energy are found, sentient beings act of their own volition or that of another.
Brahmin, may I never see or hear of anyone holding such a doctrine or view! How on earth can someone who comes and goes on his own say that one does not act of one’s own volition, nor does one act of another’s volition?”
“Excellent, Mister Gotama! Excellent! ... From this day forth, may Mister Gotama remember me as a lay follower who has gone for refuge for life.””

“Someone asked: Yes not fixed, undetermined, and unknown. But what is it within "us" that can act or influence independently outside of conditions? Of all the multitude of infinite flow of interdependent points, I assume there is some co-rippling affect, no end to being caused, no end to being effected. Is our choice eating an Apple vs a Donut factored in an algorithm dependent on all prior conditioning of past experiences and expected outcome of future long term reward against short term satisfaction. Is there really choice hidden in there or simply born of conditions and situations of our current predicaments. Ongoing evolution of genetics, family, society, era, location, culture, and luck. 🙂

Soh replied: “Us” is an aggregation, it is a convention like chariot. That is like asking how does the chariot move, actually chariot and movement is dependently designated, agent and action is dependently designated and unfindable. Choice or intention is dependently originating also. Buddha taught, not caused by self, by other, nor causelessly, but via dependent origination. Not caused by self means not caused by an agent, and also Madhyamika explains not caused by the same thing. Not caused by other negates notions of annihilation of some existent self, and also negates notions of fatalism or determinism as if things are caused by “other” with no relation to itself. Rather whatever manifests, manifests due to conditions. For example if desire arise, it arise due to the arising of pleasant sensations (say, nice smell of food) and latent tendencies towards craving and grasping. They do not arise due to agency but due to conditions. But those conditionings are not the same as “caused by others”. They are also subject to cessation. The path that leads to cessation is also dependently originating such as the twelve transcendental links of dependent origination (the one that talks about practice factors like joy, etc), and so on. Then when we get to subtler level, we realise the non arising and non origination of what dependently originates.”

Soh: “spontaneous presencing is none other than the Maha (great/boundless) total exertion of the seamless conditions of the three times and ten directions, however it is not a linear causality where cause and effect are strictly separate with an actor (cause) and acted-upon (effect). As Dogen said, “Cause is not before and effect is not after.” and John Tan wrote in 2013, “Do you feel being caused or effected? It is just a single flow. Now when we see one, the 10000 things arise”. “

Soh Wei Yu wrote:

"What you said is not completely wrong but can be misleading unless you understand 'nature' as 'dependent origination' (replying to a post about anger, killing, suffering being the expression of nature instead of a self). Which is to say, it is not fate, or some sort of outside determinism, nor is it spontaneous arising without causes, but simply dependencies playing out here.

For example, torturing people is the result of ignorance, aggression, etc etc. There are various causes and conditions as listed in the twelve links of dependent arising. And it is not something that is fixed. By engaging in dharma practice we deal with the afflictions and liberate them. Four noble truths are like what doctor does - diagnosis, cause, relief, cure. Four noble truths are completely in alignment with "no self, dependent origination". It would be erroneous if a doctor realizes there is no self, therefore, thinks that all diseases are 'just as it is' and should not or cannot be dealt with. They should be dealt with. But they are dealt with not via the attempting to exert control or hard will via by the false notion of agency (sickness can't be cured merely by trying to will or control it out of existence - there are so many dependencies involved). They are dealt with via seeing its dependent origination and treating its dependent origination in a non-inherent way.

Now in the case of 'torturing', if someone practices metta, it can help (or if you prefer, leave out the 'someone' -- 'practicing metta can help'). Then when fundamental delusion is cleared, aggression can no longer arise. There is nobody controlling anger, anger arise whether one wants to or not -- yet it can be treated by applying the right antidote (e.g. metta) or actualizing wisdom so that it releases (e.g. anatta, twofold emptiness), just like diseases happen whether one wants to or not -- yet there is medicine, cure. There is suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, and the path that ends suffering."

John Tan then added on:

"[Someone wrote:] “There is nobody controlling anger, anger arise whether one wants to or not”

[John replied:] Maybe sees it this way:

There is no one controlling anger, anger arises due to dependent origination.

With ignorance comes attachment. When attachment meets its secondary conditions, anger arises. Without secondary conditions, anger does not arise. Although it does not arise, it will not cease to arise unless the primary cause is severed. Here the appearance of “spontaneous arising” is seen from the perspective of DO.

Seeing this way, there is anatta; there is dependent origination; there is mindfulness of the cause of anger, the conditions, the cure and the ending of it. There is no bypassing as in “nothing needs be done”, albeit no-self."

On the subject of free will:

"Nihilistic tendencies arise when the insight of anatta is skewed towards the no-doership aspect. The happening by itself must be correctly understood. It appears that things are accomplished by doing nothing but in actual case it is things get done due to ripening of action and conditions.

So the lack of self-nature does not imply nothing needs be done or nothing can be done. That is one extreme. At the other end of extreme is the self-nature of perfect control of what one wills, one gets. Both are seen to be false. Action + conditions leads to effect.
June 1 at 11:32am · Unlike · 8"

Also in 2008:

(7:23 PM) Thusness: We will not know perfect conditionality is unconditioned
(7:23 PM) Thusness: because the inherent and dualistic mind priced 'controller', 'self'
(7:24 PM) Thusness: The 'perfect conditionality' is never freedom to an inherent and dualistic mind.
(7:24 PM) Thusness: What is the method of practice in Christianity?
(7:25 PM) AEN: surrendering?
(7:25 PM) Thusness: yes
(7:25 PM) Thusness: surrendering is a total giving up, losing self control
(7:25 PM) Thusness: isn't that perfect loss of control and freedom?
(7:27 PM) AEN: no
(7:27 PM) AEN: cos everything continues to be done without a doer, its only the illusion of a doer that is dissolved?
(7:27 PM) AEN: its more like a happening
(7:27 PM) Thusness: yes but isn't that a lost of control?
(7:28 PM) AEN: dunnu leh, but intention can still arise even though there is no doer... so it's not that there is no control
(7:29 PM) Thusness: there is no control
(7:29 PM) AEN: oic
(7:29 PM) AEN: no control but intention arises
(7:29 PM) AEN: resulting in deeds
(7:29 PM) Thusness: there is intention

(7:30 PM) Thusness: we are confused because we 'tend' to analyse and not 'see' the actual happening.
(7:30 PM) Thusness: just like a hand, each fingers does not control
(7:30 PM) Thusness: when you close your hand, it becomes a fist.
(7:30 PM) Thusness: each finger does not control
(7:31 PM) Thusness: like working in a group
(7:31 PM) Thusness: each individual does not control
(7:31 PM) Thusness: but each individual can contribute
(7:31 PM) Thusness: 'control' is really an illusion...though there is intention
(7:32 PM) AEN: oic.. wat you mean is that your intention is only part of the conditioning?
(7:32 PM) Thusness: no lah
(7:33 PM) Thusness: contributes as a form of conditions you mean?
(7:33 PM) AEN: ya
(7:33 PM) AEN: wat you mean
(7:33 PM) Thusness: for an arising outcome
(7:33 PM) Thusness: means intention serves condition for an arising outcome
(7:33 PM) AEN: icic..

In 2009:

(12:59 PM) Thusness: there is intention, there is doing but there is no agent
so there is intention but there is no control
(12:59 PM) Thusness: intention only as cause and conditions
(12:59 PM) AEN: oic..
(12:59 PM) Thusness: so karma, intentions, tendencies and then manifestation
when you chant, why it works
when you summarize, why it works
(1:00 PM) Thusness: but it works not through an agent controlling an outcome
(1:00 PM) AEN: but it can be misunderstood as determinism? like every action and intention is conditioned
(1:00 PM) Thusness: yes
there is intention
(1:01 PM) Thusness: intention affects outcome
but not like an agent in control of something
(1:01 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:01 PM) Thusness: effects comes powerfully strong when there is complete oneness
that the imprints is strong and stable
(1:01 PM) AEN: wat effects
wat you mean
(1:02 PM) Thusness: means like practice makes perfect lah

(1:02 PM) Thusness: you practice and don't have to ask for result
let it sink into your deepest most consciousness
it is always like that

Session Start: Monday, April 06, 2009

(1:40 PM) AEN: i forwarded you a second mail about free will
(1:47 PM) Thusness: There is influence, there is no control.
(1:47 PM) Thusness: And influence is by intention and imprints.
(1:52 PM) Thusness: Next there is also nothing to fear about 'no-control'. We must clearly know what is meant by no-control in actual experience. It sounds uncomfortable when our mind is inherent but in actual experience it is liberating because 'inherent view' blinds us from right experience and understanding.
(1:54 PM) Thusness: However this is not to say that everything is determined. The advaita practitioners is not aware of imprints and karma and mistaken spontaneity due to dependent origination with determinism.

...

Session Start: Friday, April 10, 2009

(2:34 PM) AEN: konomonte asked a qn on free will to dharma dan and he replied... i forwarded to

(10:22 PM) Thusness: read. Quite good. :)
(10:23 PM) AEN: icic..
(10:24 PM) Thusness: komomonte cannot understand the question of free will this way.
(10:26 PM) Thusness: he must first experience no-self and understand how subject/object view affect us then when he look at the question of free will, he will be able to understand better.
(10:29 PM) Thusness: because when our mind and experienced are shaped by inherent thoughts, we see 'free will' as a form of freedom. Once we are able to go beyond dualistic and inherent views, we see otherwise. But we must also not lead to the wrong understanding of determinism for both free will and determinism are extremes.
(10:29 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:31 PM) Thusness: what did you write to him?
(10:31 PM) AEN: you mean previously
(10:31 PM) Thusness: yeah
(10:33 PM) AEN: basically i said what you said, that things do not happen by chance or ramdomly or determined, but due to conditions. so there is no control, but there is influence by intentions and imprints.
(10:33 PM) Thusness: yes
(10:34 PM) Thusness: Dharma Dan's answer i also along that line.
(10:34 PM) Thusness: It is causal.

...

(8:45 AM) Thusness: yeah...overwhelmed by the taste of presence, we wanted so much to make it 'independent' to suit our 'free will' and 'absolute' model of our dualistic paradigm, that is the mind created such a notion of Absolute Reality.
(8:46 AM) Thusness: This will only hinder our progress from further experiencing presence.

...
Also I wrote this in my e-book:

6th April 2012
No-self does not imply determinism.
As I wrote to someone:
.....
Yes but not to be mistaken that will has no part in all these. The teaching of anatta or no self does not deny will or the aggregates... The buddha teaches that a sentient being is simply a convention for five aggregates: matter/body, feelings, perception, volition, consciousness. Notice that volition is part of it. This will/volition can be directed towards a wholesome or unwholesome path. However, also remember that the five aggregates are empty of self - and are without agent. Does that mean there is no free will? In a sense yes, but neither does it imply determinism: another dualistic extreme. Free will means subjective controller determines action, determinism means objective world determines subjective experience. In reality there is no subject and object - in thinking just thought, in hearing just sound. But there are requisite conditions for every manifestation. Those conditions can be changed if there is a correct path.

A concrete example: if you ask a beginner to run 2.4km in 9 minutes with an unfit body, that is asking for the impossible. No matter how hard willed is he, he is never going to make it. Why? The current requisite conditions of his body is such that the result of running 9 minutes is impossible. Control, agency, doesn't apply when manifestation always arise due to conditions.

It however also means that if you exercise regularly for months or years, there is no reason the body (conditions) cannot be improved to the degree that running 9 mins is definitely possible. This is what I mean by working with conditions.

So those teachers who say meditation are useless are not understanding latent tendencies and conditions. They mistook no doership with some kind of fatalism. Every proper practice has its place in working with one's conditions.

Just because there is no self, no doer, doesn't mean my body is fated to be unfit and I can't reach the 9 min. Just because I exercise regularly doesn't mean I am reinforcing the notion of self or doership. In any case, action is always

without self.

It also does not mean that "will" has no place at all. "Will" is often misunderstood to be linked to a self or agent that has full control over things, whereas it is simply more manifestation and conditions. Yes, sheer will going against conditions isn't going to work – this is not understanding no-self and dependent origination. But if will is directed properly with correct understanding of no-self and conditionality, at a proper path and practice, it can lead to benefits.

That is why the first teaching of Buddha is the four noble truths: the truth of suffering, the cause of suffering, the end of suffering, the way to end suffering. This path arises as a result of his direct insight into no-self and dependent origination.

Like a doctor, you don't tell your patients "you are fated to be ill and sick and in pain, because there is no individual controller, everything is the will of God". That is nonsense. Instead, you diagnose the illness, you seek the cause of illness, you give a treatment that eliminates the cause of illness. There is no self, there is no controller, but there is conditions and manifestation and a way to treat bad conditions. This is the way of the four noble truths.

...

John Tan, 2020:

The logic that since there is no agency, hence no choice to be made is no different from "no sufferer, therefore no suffering".

This is not anatta insight.

What is seen through in anatta is the mistaken view that the conventional structure of "subject action object" represents reality when it is not. Action does not require an agent to initiate it. It is language that creates the confusion that nouns are required to set verbs into motion.

Therefore the action of choosing continues albeit no chooser.

"Mere suffering exists, no sufferer is found;

The deeds are, but no doer of the deeds is there;

Nibbāna is, but not the man that enters it;

The path is, but no traveler on it is seen."

Related:

Choosing

Alan Watts: Agent and Action

Investigation into Movement

No-Self Does Not Imply Solipsism

(This issue is not peculiar to Stage 5 and in fact may be more common in earlier phases of insights prior to thorough deconstruction of Subjectivity, the issue of falling into the other extreme of inherently existing physicality may be more pertinent to Stage 5)

Some people fall into the erroneous view of solipsism, the notion that there is no others than yourself, or that there are no others and only your presently arising experience exists. No-self does not negate conventional (other) mindstreams, only an inherently existing and unchanging and independent soul, self/Self, agent (perceiver, doer) or medium of experiences and actions. Mindstreams are conventionally valid like chariot, while the notion of inherent existence and souls are as impossible and invalid even conventionally as a rabbit with horns, which is to say they have no valid basis of designation at all and is purely a figment of imagination, just like unicorns. Inherent existence does not exist even conventionally, it is an impossible way of existence much like the impossibility of a “square triangle”. Conventionally, we can understand minds and mindstreams to be unique for each individual, there is nothing universal (all beings are mere extensions of One Mind) nor solipsistic (only my present mind/experience exists) about minds. However, just as with a chariot, mindstreams when sought for cannot be found whether apart from or within the parts or basis of designation, so mindstreams too are merely (dependently) designated and are ultimately also empty and non-arisen.

“Anatta and emptiness is in some ways diametrically opposite of Advaita view. We deconstruct "Oneness", there is no ontological "oneness" or a unifying reality in Buddhism. That would be an essence view, and the insight of anatta and emptiness deconstructs all essence views. Not only does all mindstreams remain differentiated rather than collapsed into oneness, all experiences are also not collapsed into oneness - therefore sight is not same as sound, no two moments or experience arising in dependence on the different sense faculties and objects are the same, and consciousness is always simply the myriad manifestation in all its diversities.” – Soh, 2021. Also see chapter on: Anatta as Dispersing into Multiplicity + Spontaneous, Disjoint and Unsupported

[1:07 PM, 11/25/2020] John Tan: Only when you subsume into one, it turns solipsistic. So either freedom of extremes or you see DO and total exertion and emptiness. Then you do not fall into extremes.

“Although Bhāviveka doesn’t struggle that much, he is quite clear:
“Since [the tīrthika position of] self, permanence, all pervasiveness and oneness contradict their opposite, [the Buddhist position of] no-self, impermanence, non-pervasiveness and multiplicity, they are completely different.” – Kyle Dixon, 2020

“Bhāviveka demonstrates the proper way to view buddhanature:

The statement "The tathāgata pervades" means wisdom pervades all objects of knowledge, but it does not mean abiding in everything like Viśnu. Further, "Tathāgatagarbhin" means emptiness, signlessness and absence of aspiration exist the continuums of all sentient beings, but is not an inner personal agent pervading everyone.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

Jake Karat
I once slipped into a solipsistic state - admittedly after consuming to much cannabis over a summer after graduating high school - and it was terrifying. I look back and have realized after reading more on Buddhism that there was something missing to the "approach".
This is where "No-Self" is so important to understand. Solipsism could be the result of "non-duality" IF there is still an attachment to a sense of "Self", in which case non-dual is still not fully understood.
When there is no "Self", there is no, "There's only me.", perspective. There are just "happenings", which include the stream of conceptualizations that give an appearance and feeling of a "Self" in the first place.

- □

  Reply

- 20h

-

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Jake Karat
John Tan wrote:
Yes solipsistic state can be overcome by:
1. What he said.
2. Overcoming the sense of "mine".
3. Also by de-constructing via dependent designation into kadag, primordial purity.
4. Essencelessness
Solipsisim is an extreme of deducing a conclusion using our existing dualistic and inherent paradigm. Negation without affirming anything will not.
Likewise de-construction does not lead into an all encompassing space, that too is an abstraction and extrapolation. It is to slowly allow us to see through the faulty premise and open up the entire field.
□ □ Reply

□ 8h

Ng Xin Zhao shared a link.

Aonri1 p132P2lu6fl1h2r1t a :M a ·
https://www.reddit.com/.../all_forms_of_nonduality.../

Any refutations to this? The author there asked for help to refute.

reddit.com

All forms of nonduality inevitably lead to solipsism

*Trigger warning: the ideas discussed here can be very detrimental to the mental health of some people. If you're prone to suffer from...

43 Comments

▫ Yin Ling

Admin

This is because the author is reifying / privileging his “mind”.

He has seen through some “I” but not yet seen through “mine”

Why is the experience of talking to someone “mine”?

In an experience, is there anything in the xp, say an xp of a seeing a flower; “mine”?

Who says it’s “mine”?

That extra “mine” is an extra imputation.

Xp of a flower is just that - colours, eye consciousness, consciousness, that dependent originate.

That’s it.

No I , no mine.

So shouldn’t be solipsism

Hence Buddha taught to take the view of DO.

- 2d

▫ Stan Gogan

Lol. Solipsism is just an idea. Reality does not think of itself in these terms. Only the small self that projects itself onto the universe.

- 2d

▫ Soh Wei Yu

Admin

Yeah. On one extreme everything is subsumed into a singular mind. That causes solipsism but eliminates subject object division. That is a phase that many people including John Tan has experienced in the substantialist nondual phases.

On the other extreme all self/Self is deconstructed but everything is subsumed or collapsed into objective matter. The world is inherently existing and real. Everything is vibrant and alive but objective or objectively existing. That is the actual freedom teachings. Here there is no solipsism but materialism, but also no subject object division. This is also a phase John Tan went through post anatta but before emptiness.
Then there is the emptiness teachings, which allows us to deconstruct everything without subsuming to either poles, all subjects and objects are liberated on the spot by seeing its empty and non-arisen and dependently designated / dependently originated nature. That is the nature of all appearance / mind / phenomena, empty and yet luminous/vibrant/alive.

- 2d
- Edited

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Conventionally different mindstreams are still different mindstreams but not established as real ultimately, and also not subsumed into a “one”.
□ □ Reply

□ 2d

“Why do you believe there’s such a thing as a ‘sentient being’?
Māra, is this your theory?
This is just a pile of conditions,
you won’t find a sentient being here.
When the parts are assembled
we use the word ‘chariot’.
So too, when the aggregates are present
‘sentient being’ is the convention we use.
But it’s only suffering that comes to be,
lasts a while, then disappears.
Naught but suffering comes to be,
naught but suffering ceases.” - Vajira Sutta

“The subsuming of everything into one's mind took place because one's mind seems to be the common factor in the mode of enquiry in solipsism.

However if using the same line of reasoning, it is in others’ mind as well. If everything is in everyone's mind, then mind is no more the common factor but "Everything". If you see this common factor of everything and shift your attention to everything, then experience turns very "physical".

Prasangika overcomes such issue by inquiring into its "inherentness". Taking the “seed-plant-tree" example, why is the seed "growing"? Is there anything at the side of the "sprout" that is saying it is growing? It can be understood as a decaying process as well.” - John Tan, 2019

John Tan on how the tendency of solipsism arises post non-dual: “Characteristics of internal and private not deconstructed. Just like when the line that demarcates left and right dissolved, it does not mean all of left has become right or all of right has become left.” – John Tan, 2021

“[4:00 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: When I realized for the first time how PRIVATE the "objective external world" is, I was thrown into amazement and enter into the realm of "All is Mind". I am experiencing my Mind not as a background, not as illusive thoughts floating in my little head BUT in real time, directly, as the world I have so long mistaken as "external" and "objective".

I touch everything with great intensity; feel everything with immense sensitivity, hear sound as if I am tasting it. Everything turns magic, primal and miraculous.
[4:01 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: And the intensity is not only visual.. the sense of smell and auroma is so acute and other senses. Seems like I skew towards visual most of the time
[4:02 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: You wrote this?
[4:02 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: Yes

[4:12 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Yes similar.. the objective external world is completely illusion and all is just Mind, just God. Except it’s no longer even private it’s like everything is lived. All my actions and experience are the spontaneous play of this intelligence. But any way of conceptualizing what this intelligence is is a form of idolization, be it primitive way of seeing God as a bearded man in the sky or as a formless background of experience. It can only be tasted in complete immediacy
[4:14 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: When I realized for the first time how PRIVATE the "objective external world" is, I was thrown into amazement and enter into the realm of "All is Mind". I am experiencing my Mind not as a background, not as illusive thoughts floating in my little head BUT in real time, directly, as the world I have so long mistaken as "external" and "objective".

I touch the wall, keep feeling the texture, I really wanted take it all in. I feel the sensations of the hardness of the floor with great intensity; feel everything with immense sensitivity; hear sound as if I am tasting it. Everything turns magic, primal and miraculous.
[4:15 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: One of the essential insight - All is Mind.

[4:15 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Very similar except I didn’t have notions of privateness or personality or self.. privateness sound quite individualistic :P
[4:18 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: Yes. Privateness yet "fully external and objective", two into one. This also leads to another 2 deep insights ... The insight that designations is very participative and freedom from extremes.
[4:21 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: When you move "internal" into "external and objective" world, colors, smell, sound....marvelling all these aliveness with wonder.
[4:22 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. yes
[4:24 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: The convention "private", "internal" suddenly turns upside down...suddenly your whole head and internal world squeeze through a pinhole into a world of immerse colors and aliveness.
[4:25 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: The lil self disappears. you feel God like and divine and spiritual.
[4:25 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Ic yes
[4:27 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: That is why I kept telling you about intensity

[4:30 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: However the intensity of all is Mind lasted for several months before it wears off. All my insights lasted for almost 90 days cycle before wearing off.
[4:31 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: It’s both the intensity and the sense of being lived completely without individual doership or agency. Like you said anatta in all three aspects and the aspect of vivid aliveness, clarity, intelligence and vitality experienced all at once
[4:31 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: I mean all the intense experience that came from insights

[4:34 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: I wonder how those without insights feel and experience
[4:35 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: It can also be triggered by yoga esp when I do inversion and yoganidrasana

[4:38 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: Once I was doing inversion and the blood flows to my head and I repeated several times followed by yoganidrasana, while doing it I realized if I can manage my breath, the energy can flow to my brow and crown and suddenly energy broke lose while still remaining in the pose
[4:39 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Oic wow..
[4:39 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: Then post yoga I was sitting then I can't feel my whole body and head ... Suddenly I turn transparent while sitting
[4:39 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: I open my eyes...the living colors and I become one.
[4:40 AM, 8/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. nice when was that
[4:40 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: Long ago
[4:40 AM, 8/1/2018] John Tan: I still can trigger it”

“[1:09 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Now having non-dual experience or a state of no- mind do not mean finality.
[1:10 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: We must also free our from many more intellectual obscurations.
[1:10 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: And other obscurations of cause.
[1:11 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Like having non-dual or no-mind may not free on from the notion of self.
[1:11 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Freeing one from the notion of self, may not free one from the notion of cause.

[1:11 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Freeing one from the notion of cause, may not free one from the notion of existence.
[1:12 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Freeing one from duality, may not free one from non-duality.
[1:13 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: The color you see is neither inside, nor outside. It is inside, it is also outside. It is private, it is also public.

So it is neither too.
[1:14 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: So freedom from insight is not different from a blank state.
[1:15 AM, 5/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: You mean is different
[1:15 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Yes
[1:15 AM, 5/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[1:18 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: So in addition to walking in a park, being anatta, borderless and open, non-dual and total exerted, you must also spend time to free up further intellectual obscurations to blind us.
[1:18 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: That blind us I mean.
[1:18 AM, 5/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. through mmk?
[1:20 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: The chariot analogy is enough...but the diamond splitter, neither one nor many...all these ways of ultimate analysis that see through essence can help also.
[1:20 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: But simple looking and understanding the chariot analogy helps me a lot...it depends on individual.
[1:21 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Then authenticate it with your actual experience in anatta.

More from 2020:

[1:05 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Don't you find internal as private?
[1:06 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Internal are like thoughts, sensations, perceptions. External are like shape and size and colors of objects, sounds and so on
[1:06 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Only to you...no one else can see it
[1:06 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Which are seen to be sourced from externally
[1:06 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah
[1:07 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: External is not private to you
[1:07 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: your thoughts, your experiences are internal
[1:07 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Private to you and not know by anyone else right?
[1:07 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah
[1:09 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: External implies outside as if seen by everyone
[1:09 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Somehow objective correct when we talk about external
[1:10 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Internal is private to only you and usually we are talking about mind events
[1:10 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Don't we
[1:11 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah.. i would say even all my sense perceptions are internal mind events, they are not shared.. but the qualities of sensory experience (like colors, shapes, etc) can be seen as being sourced externally so they are “external” [post anatta prior to emptiness]
[1:12 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Yes

[1:13 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: The division of an internal and external is not as simple...when you investigate deeper and deeper...one gets confused like hall of mirrors, like solipsism...
[1:13 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: But I am not going into that
[1:15 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: For the current world especially ruled by a scientific thought, we assumed a true objective world right?
[1:15 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Now I am asking you, post anatta how is this different?
[1:16 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Immediately after anatta even without going through emptiness, one no longer experience in terms subject and object
[1:16 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: In relation to internal and external, what happened?
[1:17 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: No subject and no object, is it the same as no internal and no external?
[1:17 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: No, since external world may be seen to be inherent
[1:17 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: No means?
[1:17 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Not the same
[1:18 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: So post anatta, what difference arise in your understanding of internal and external?
[1:20 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: How you feel about external?
[1:20 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: First you must understand, it doesn't change anything....experience still remains the same
[1:21 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: But we are talking about perception change
[1:22 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: When you look at external world post anatta, what happened to external world?
[1:22 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: you realize what?
[1:23 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: you realized what you thought to be external, all characteristics suddenly turns very private right
[1:23 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah
[1:24 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: They are private and is luminous mind.. yet characteristics of it (like redness of rose) can still subtly be seen to be sourced externally
[1:24 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Now you must differentiate, inner world from conceptual world...
[1:26 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: We have divided the world oddly into an internal world of mind and external world of matter....
[1:26 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: The mind through a set of learned knowledged understand from these lens.
[1:27 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: So when you see the world as luminous and everything turns alive, what do you mean?
[1:28 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Due to realising anatta the reification of background/foreground gone, luminosity is tasted as aggregates Directly, gaplessly
[1:29 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Everything becomes vivid, alive, brilliant, intense, etc
[1:30 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: No division
[1:30 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Or at least there is a first realization of how seeing through constructs is like
[1:31 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[1:32 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: So when you say no sense of internal/external what you mean?
[1:34 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: The anatta one is more on no division and no subject object.. but emptiness is more relevant to dissolving mind/matter inherency
[1:35 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Look into the experience, internal and external....in anatta, no mind, some felt internal turns external...because they are led to the foreground
[1:36 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: They are suddenly led to the manifold of what we called the external world
[1:43 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..

[1:43 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: So when we say no internal/external what we meant is something different
[1:58 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: If one subsume, everything will turn internal because we are analysing everything from certain standpoint, in this case from a "privacy" standpoint...
[8:51 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[10:23 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: In the case of actual freedom its more like since self dissolve and everything turns objective, even internal mind events are the exertion of an infinite universe being aware of itself through a brain, as a flesh and blood body
[10:24 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: So its not that they do not see internal and external, but the internal are subsumed as epiphenomena of the external.. at least what i think
[10:27 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: you must come out your own understanding of the what you call the view of the world post that...what describes best...when your view does not sync or work with your experience, such a desync cannot result in effortless and spacious freedom
[10:28 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Is it like indra-net, is it like mind/matter, is it like DO/emptiness...what best described your insights, your experiences
[10:29 AM, 6/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Hmm was writing about indra net before you wrote lol
[10:29 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: All are different descriptions
[10:30 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: So which suits best and what is lacking
[10:30 AM, 6/1/2020] John Tan: Think about it

“On solipsism, as pointed out by John before based on his own experience (that is, he too faced this tendency of solipsism after an initial breakthrough to nondual decades ago), the danger of someone going into nondual or even emptiness without the taste of total interpenetration is that one can easily fall into the extreme of solipsism. If we are directly experiencing our reality like in Vipassana, what we see are endless dependencies - seamless and intricate, in such a case there is no danger of falling into the view of solipsism.

As I wrote in my article Dharma Body last year: "...(Note: Dharma as simply a unit of experience dependently originating - not implying any inherently existing material universe [as the universe/dharma body here is seen as marvelous activities/phenomena dependently originating seamlessly without center or boundaries], nor is this dharma body in any sense a subjective body at all [if it is subjectively self-existent then causes and conditions will not be incorporated nor necessary for any given manifestation])..." - http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2013/09/dharma-body.html

Also, as Piotr shared last month, "...what Soh told me in the past, if we apply Buddha's deconstruction from sound example from sutra, then clarity I call visual form right now of this laptop, letters is no more "mine" than any of secondary conditions right now, and Buddha's teaching about not-mine and other teachings sealed possibility of solipsism permanently for me. Somehow [solipsism] for me it's a non-issue."

He's referring to what I told him many months ago:

"John wrote "you see, when we say there is no self or other, we can still not see in terms of DO."

I commented: this is very important.. and lately I'm seeing it more as well. To overcome all sense of I, me, and even mine, D.O. has to step in. Many people talk about no I, no background, but still there is sense of mine... and there are also those that say everything is 'the manifestation of my mind or my nature'.. that is subtly subsuming everything to mind. Even if there is no duality.

In dependent origination you totally see the entire formation of interdependencies... not in words but directly taste the totality of its workings forming every moment of experience. When the drum beat sounds you don't see it as just 'the manifestation of my mind' but you see it as the person hitting, the drum, the vibration, the ears etc... all in total exertion... how can that have anything to do with I or mine? It is not 'mine' anymore than it is the person hitting, the drum's, the vibration's... etc. It is not only that there is no hearer behind sound... not only no I but no mine at all.. the sound itself does not belong to anyone... it is the entire universe in total exertion so to speak.. but it is not understood in logic. You have to see the whole process and interdependencies directly. Breathing is like this... walking is like this... every action every experience is like this. This is the path to dissolve I, me, mine... only through D.O. is the release thorough.

Not 'everything is just consciousness' or 'everything is my consciousness'... consciousness isn't that special or important. It does not have a special, independent, ontological status. Rather it is the interdependencies the workings of D.O. through which that moment of consciousness/experience is in total exertion. The true turning point is when mind is completely separated from mine.. I, me, mine.. the dualistic and inherent tendency must be dissolved and replaced with the wisdom of D.O."

Some conversations with John back in 2012 are quite illuminating on this subject:

John: To me is just is "Soh" an eternal being...that's all. No denial of Soh as a conventional self. All is just him is an inference too. There is no other is also an assumption.

Soh: That's what I said, lol. He didn't see it.

John: But other mindstreams is a more valid assumption. Don't you think so? And verifiable.

Soh: Yeah.

John: Whatever in conventional reality still remain, only that reification is seen through. Get it? The centre is seen through be it "subject" or "object", they are imputed mental constructs. Only the additional "ghostly something" is seen through. Not construing and reifying. Nothing that "subject" does not exist. This seeing through itself led to implicit non-dual experience.

Soh: "Nothing that "subject" does not exist." - what you mean?

John: Not "subject" or "object" does not exist. Or dissolving object into subject or subject into object... etc. That "extra" imputation is seen through. Conventional reality still remain as it is. By the way, focus more on practice in releasing any holdings.... do not keep engaging on all these.

Soh: I see.. Conventional reality are just names imposed on non-inherent aggregates, right.

John: Yes. That led to releasing of the mind from holding...no subsuming of anything. What you wrote is unclear. Do you get what I mean? Doesn't mean Soh does not exist... lol. Or I am you or you are me. Just not construing and reifying.

Soh: I see. Nondual is collapsing objects to self, thus I am you. Anatta simply sees through reification, but conventionally I am I, you are you.

John: Or collapsing subject into object. You are still unclear about this and mixed up. Seeing through the reification of "subject", "object", "self", "now", "here". Get it? Seeing through "self" led to implicit non-dual experience. Because experience turns direct without reification. In seeing, just scenery. Like you see through the word "weather". That weather-Ness. Be it subject/object/weather/...etc. That is mind free of seeing "things" existing inherently. Experience turns vivid direct and releasing. But I don't want you to keep participating idle talk and neglect practice... always over emphasizing unnecessarily. What happens to experience?

Soh: you mean after anatta? Direct, luminous, but no ground of abiding (like some inherent awareness).

John: And what do you mean by that?

Soh: Means there are only transient six sense streams experience, in seen just seen, etc. Nothing extra.

John: Six stream experiences is just a convenient raft. Nothing ultimate. Not only must you see that there is no Seer + seeing + seen... you must see the immense connectedness. Implicit Non-dual in experience in anatta to you means what?” - Soh, 2014

“Buddha never used the term "self" to refer to an unconditioned, permanent, ultimate entity. He also never asserted that there was no conventional "self," the subject of transactional discourse. So, it is very clear in the sutras that the Buddha negated an ultimate self and did not negate a conventional self.” – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2020

“Anatman is the negation of an unconditioned, permanent, ultimate entity that moves from one temporary body to another. It is not the negation of "Sam," "Fred," or "Jane" used as a conventional designation for a collection of aggregates. Since the Buddha clearly states in many Mahāyāna sūtras, "all phenomena" are not self, and since everything is included there, including buddhahood, therefore, there are no phenomena that can be called a self, and since there are nothing outside of all phenomena, a "self," other than an arbitrary designation, does not exist.”

- Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith

More on the teaching of conventional self:

“ https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo/Shobogenzo%20complete.pdf

Underlying the whole of Dōgen’s presentation is his own experience of no longer being attached to any sense of a personal self that exists independent of time and of other beings, an experience which is part and parcel of his ‘dropping off of body and mind’. From this perspective of his, anything having existence—which includes every thought and thing—is inextricably bound to time, indeed, can be said to ‘be time’, for there is no thought or thing that exists independent of time. Time and being are but two aspects of the same thing, which is the interrelationship of anicca, ‘the ever-changing flow of time’ and anatta, ‘the absence of any permanent self existing within or independent of this flow of time’. Dōgen has already voiced this perspective in Discourse 1: A Discourse on Doing One’s Utmost in Practicing the Way of the Buddhas (Bendōwa), and in Discourse 3: On the Spiritual Question as It Manifests Before Your Very Eyes (Genjō Kōan), where he discussed the Shrenikan view of an ‘eternal self ’ and the Buddhist perception of ‘no permanent self ’.

In the present discourse, Dōgen uses as his central text a poem by Great Master Yakusan Igen, the Ninth Chinese Ancestor in the Sōtō Zen lineage. In the Chinese version, each line of this poem begins with the word uji, which functions to introduce a set of couplets describing temporary conditions that appear to be contrastive, but which, in reality, do not stand against each other. These conditions comprise what might be referred to as ‘an I at some moment of time’; this is a use of the word ‘I’ that does not refer to some ‘permanent self ’, abiding unchanged over time (as the Shrenikans maintained) but to a particular set of transient conditions at a particular time. In other words, there is no permanent, unchanging ‘Yakusan’, only a series of ever-changing conditions, one segment of which is perceived as ‘a sentient being’, which is, for convenience, conventionally referred to as ‘Yakusan’. Both Yakusan and Dōgen understand uji (in its sense of ‘that which exists at some time’) as a useful way of expressing the condition of anatta, and in this sense it is used to refer to a state of ‘being’ that is neither a ‘permanent self ’ nor something separate from ‘other’; it is the ‘I’ referred to in one description of a kenshō experience (that is, the experiencing of one’s Buddha Nature) as ‘the whole universe becoming I’. Hence, when the false notion of ‘having a permanent self ’ is abandoned, then what remains is just uji, ‘the time when some form of being persists’.

After presenting Yakusan’s poem, Dōgen focuses on that aspect of the poem that does not deal with metaphors, images, symbols, etc., and which is the one element in the poem that readers are most likely to pay small heed to: the phrase uji itself. His opening statement encapsulates the whole of what he is talking about in this text, namely: “The phrase ‘for the time being’ implies that time in its totality is what existence is, and that existence in all its occurrences is what time is.”

“Why do you believe there’s such a thing as a ‘sentient being’?
Māra, is this your theory?

This is just a pile of conditions,
you won’t find a sentient being here.
When the parts are assembled
we use the word ‘chariot’.
So too, when the aggregates are present
‘sentient being’ is the convention we use.
But it’s only suffering that comes to be,
lasts a while, then disappears.
Naught but suffering comes to be,
naught but suffering ceases.” - Vajira Sutta

John Tan, 2007: “No-self does not need observation. No-self is a form of realisation. To observe is to track the 'self': where is it, what is it - that 'sense of self', who, where and what... till we thoroughly understood it is an illusion, till we know there is awareness, but there never was a 'Self/self'. Isn't awareness 'self'? Well, you can say so if you insist...ehehhe
(1:59 PM) Thusness: if there is non-dual, no background, no mine and 'I', impermanence, not a form of entity and yet we still want to call it 'Self', so be it. :P
(1:59 PM) Thusness: its okie...
(1:59 PM) Thusness: lol”

John Tan, 2020: “Brahman or not doesn't matter as long Brahman is not any transpersonal being in a wonderland, but is the very relative phenomena that we misunderstood.”

John Tan, 2020: “I am not against the idea of substratum as if there is nothing, but [against] the idea that apart from the ongoing appearances, there is truly existing ‘something’ like a mirror and its reflections.

Substratum is a convention. It is like body and the dancing sensation I told Andre. The substratum is just a convention for these ongoing appearances. It was expressed that way due to language structure.”

When asked about the difference between an ultimate and inherently existing Self and the Buddhist view of “mindstreams”, Soh replied with a quotation from Ven. Hui-feng: “Venerable Hui-Feng nicely explains the difference between the view of "atman" and "mindstream" (as taught by Buddha):

> In short:
>
> "self" = "atman" / "pudgala" / "purisa" / etc.
> --> permanent, blissful, autonomous entity, totally unaffected by any conditioned phenomena
>
> "mind" = "citta" / "manas" / "vijnana" / etc.

--> stream of momentarily arising and ceasing states of consciousness, thus not an entity, each of which is conditioned by sense organ, sense object and preceding mental states

Neither are material.

That's a brief overview, lot's of things to nit pick at, but otherwise it'll require a 1000 page monograph to make everyone happy.

You'll need to study up on "dependent origination" (pratitya-samutpada) to get into any depth to answer your questions.”

“[9:56 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: This is nondual https://www.spiritualteachers.org/what-is-enlightenment/
[10:00 AM, 4/16/2021] William Lim: Thanks... it was useful to focus and unpack one topic at a time. Yesterday topic of "not seperate but yet distinct" was interesting.
[10:13 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: In anatta the all differentiations remain
[10:13 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: There is not subsuming into some oneness
[10:14 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: “...According to Dogen, this “oceanic-body” does not contain the myriad forms, nor is it made up of myriad forms – it is the myriad forms themselves. The same instruction is provided at the beginning of Shobogenzo, Gabyo (pictured rice-cakes) where, he asserts that, “as all Buddhas are enlightenment” (sho, or honsho), so too, “all dharmas are enlightenment” which he says does not mean they are simply “one” nature or mind.”
[10:14 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: - ted biringer
[10:15 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: All mindstreams are likewise differentiated, they are not subsumed into one universal consciousness like advaita
[10:15 AM, 4/16/2021] William Lim: All mindstreams are distinct and yet there are no seperation?
[10:15 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: But there is not subject object, agency-action, perceiver perceived duality
[10:16 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: In hearing, hearing is just sound, no hearer
[10:16 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Etc
[10:16 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Its not one universal consciousness arising as a sound, i dont have such concepts
[10:16 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: That is stage 4.. or stage 1 to 4
[10:17 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Even steven norquist havent really gone beyond stage 4 but his is nondual. Stage 4
[10:17 AM, 4/16/2021] William Lim: If there is no subject-object, how can there be "another" midstream?
[10:19 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: There is no subject object, but all differentiations remain. There is no hearer and no hearing besides sound, but sound is not the same as scenery, not the same as thought
[10:19 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: There is no consciousness besides manifestation and manifestation is always differentiated
[10:19 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: So even in experience everything is differentiated, why can’t there be different mindstreams?
[10:20 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Under differing conditions, different manifestations appear

[10:20 AM, 4/16/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Therefore dependent origination
[10:20 AM, 4/16/2021] William Lim: This is good clarification”

“**RESPONDENT:** *I’m just here more or less alone, I guess.*

RICHARD: Each and every human being is on their own as a flesh and blood body ... dependent upon no one; autonomous. Being *‘alone’* or lonely is a feature of being a self: ‘I’, the identity, am inside the body looking out through ‘my’ eyes as if looking out through a window, listening through ‘my’ ears as if they were microphones, tasting through ‘my’ tongue, touching through ‘my’ skin, smelling through ‘my’ nose, and thinking through ‘my’ brain. Of course ‘I’ must feel isolated, alienated, alone and lonely, for ‘I’ am cut off from the magnificence of the actual world ... the world as-it-is.

RESPONDENT: *I didn’t mean lonely by alone.*

RICHARD: One of the hallmarks of self-realisation is to no longer feel the common or garden variety of loneliness but to experience the utter aloneness of being ‘The One With No Other’; the mystical literature abounds with descriptions of the master being alone ... in its root meaning of ‘all+one’ (ME *‘al one’* from *‘al ane’* from OE *‘al ana’* from *‘al an’* where *‘al’*=*‘all’* and *‘ana’*/*‘an’*=*‘one’*). And I am not necessarily being pedagogic by digging around in the dictionaries ... for example:

• [Spiritual Seeker]: *‘Contrary to what you have said, Krishnamurti never says that he has a Soul, a Self.*

• [Richard]: ‘I beg to differ: [quote]: *‘I maintain that the only spirituality is the incorruptibility of the self which is eternal ... this is the absolute, unconditioned Truth which is Life itself’.* [end quote].

• [Spiritual Seeker]: *‘His use of ‘sacred’ and ‘holy’ do not make him so, though you use the dictionary to establish your point. Krishnamurti often departed from the dictionary meaning and substituted another meaning. For example, ‘alone’ he made to mean ‘all one’.*

• [Richard]: ‘Once again, I beg to differ: he did not make *‘alone’* mean *‘all one’* at all ... etymologically it already means ‘all one’.

The mystical quality applied to ‘alone’ has popularly come to mean ‘we are all one’ ... but the master is indeed alone in the sense of being solitary. In solipsism only oneself exists – there is no ‘others’ – and in some of the more archaic religions this gives rise to speculation that their god or goddess dreams universes peopled with beings for amusement or sport ... out of loneliness and/or boredom. Speaking personally, I was alone for eleven years – but never lonely – and one of the first things I noticed, upon breaking free of the massive delusion of godliness, was the ending of aloneness ... and I am still never, ever lonely. As a discrete flesh and blood body I am physically on my own and autonomous, but with no separative entity to feel either lonely or alone – cut off from the magnificence of the actual – the entire feeling of being solitary has ceased to exist.” - AF Richard, http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/richard/generalcorrespondence/page09a.htm

[1:59 PM, 12/6/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Kyle Dixon in Nonsectarian Dzogchen Atiyoga & Mahamudra:

"The real difference is that in Dzogchen, appearances are 'non-existent clear appearances' [med par gsal snang].

Not mind because they are ultimately unfindable, and then distinct on the level of convention."
[5:44 PM, 12/6/2019] John Tan: Meaning?
[7:15 PM, 12/6/2019] Soh Wei Yu: To dzogchen, mind and appearance are ultimately unfindable, but distinct conventionally. Therefore they are not same in dzogchen
[7:55 PM, 12/6/2019] John Tan: That is correct and accurate. Actually when we say appearance is mind, it is an experiential taste. Conventionally it should treated as distinct and DO [dependently originating]. However even saying they are different is incorrect. Language cannot define this relationship appropriately... Therefore 2 truth [conventional and ultimate]. Also it is true to talk about emptiness. Appear and not-found. Rather than to talk about it as if we're talking about One Mind.”

André A. Pais wrote in 2023:

“REFLECTIONS ON SOLIPSISM

Solipsism is based on the idea that "only I exist" or "only this experience exists" or "only this exists." Some of these expressions are subtler than others, but all amount more or less to the same. It is true that nothing in experience directly affirms anything other than experience itself. What is overlooked is that nothing in experience actually denies anything "outside" experience either. Experience is totally mute, totally silent - it says nothing whatsoever about anything (be it internal or external to it). Even concepts are utterly silent, since, in a final sense, they don't point to anything either - they are mere sounds, vibrations, images, etc. In this sense, experience - and even conceptual processes - is totally incapable of refuting or establishing solipsism.

Solipsism is also based on a half-baked intuition of non-duality. The very concepts of "this" or "I" or "mine" depend on their opposites. So, by saying that "only this exists" I'm already establishing its opposite - some "that" that is nonexistent. "Existent-this" vs. "nonexistent-that" is a dualistic stance, making solipsism inherently self-refuting. Experience is devoid of "other" or "thatness," but it too is devoid of "me/mine" or "thisness." There is nothing exclusivistic in experience - there is no exclusion of anything. It's rather the opposite, experience is intrinsically open-ended, expansive and accommodating - even of concepts positing closed, constricted and excluding attitudes.

Also, solipsism seems to be based on notions of limited space and mutual exclusion of experiences. There is a sense of "there is only here" and so a "there" is excluded. Again this is dualistic, as without the notion of "there" there can't be a "here" either. So, in the non-conceptual spaciousness of experience there can be no sense of "here." So solipsism still embraces ideas of spatial extension, distance and separation, which it then paradoxically uses to refute notions of "other separate places," etc. So, we have dualistic principles being used in the defense of some non-dual solipsistic reality.

There is also the sense that experiences are mutually exclusive - if "this" experience is "here," "other" experiences cannot be simultaneously "here." Yet, we can cultivate an openness to the possibility that "everything is already here," that "everything is intrinsically included" right within this very experience. In the same way that we can develop our conventional senses (or other "senses") and experience things previously unnoticed - but that were already present -, we can also conceive of developing perception (or some kind of empirical sensitivity) in a way that allows the

accommodation of an infinity of experiences, in opposition to the previously "singular solipsistic experience." That's what omniscience seems to entail - a non-conflicting appreciation of the totality of experiences, a full embrace of the entirety of the space-time display. In cutting through the solidity and seemingly exclusivistic nature of space and time - what is "here" is not "there," what is "now" cannot be "then" -, the "whole field" can become naturally manifest.

The sections of our experiential field that seem more obscure and concealing (like the sense of past and future experiences, and the notions of beyond the horizon and behind/bellow/above "me"), which are all instances of some type of impenetrable not-knowing, can be seen as representatives, clues or empirical "handles" that can serve as portals or doorways into the infinite dimensions of experience that remain unrevealed and unaccommodated. "Other times" and "other places," even in infinitely cosmic scales, can be seen as mere subtler dimensions - and yet unappreciated - of what is already here, of "this very experience."

Another angle of exploration is to consider if "this sole experience" is either one or many. A "many" can only be composed of a plurality of "ones" or units. Yet, no unit or singularity can ever be found - it's a logical and empirical impossibility. So, notions of singularity and plurality fall apart, and thus solipsism falls apart, since it is based on the idea of being the "singularly existing thing." Also, if "this experience" was the only existing thing, where would the seemingly diversity of experience come from? It either comes from something else (refuting solipsism) or it is generated "internally," in which case "this sole experience" is itself already a pluralistic experience.

Also, in the absence of a sense of there being some singular observer, experience is understood as "self-luminous" and "self-knowing"; why then can't the diversity of experience be already a case for so-called multiple perceivers or observers? Solipsism is based on the idea that "only I perceive" - but if all objects (material, mental or emotional) are already "self-knowing" and "naturally luminous," how can there be a sense of "only I perceive"? Experience is not intrinsically one for it arises as diversity; and it is not intrinsically many, since it's embraced by utter intimacy and non-separation. Solipsism, being based on solid notions of singularity and plurality, is incapable of appreciating the transparency and spaciousness of experience; and it is incapable of appreciating the fine balance of appearance-emptiness, a luminous display that is beyond materialistic, solidified and dualistic tendencies - that is, in fact, beyond all notions whatsoever, be they dual, non-dual, both or neither. Solipsism seems to be a classical example of an attempt to interpret an utterly transcendent and unlimited reality by making use of somewhat mystical and yet still conventional and limited notions and perspectives.”

The Lucknow Disease

Generally Buddhists don’t have this issue, the neo-Advaitins have this issue.

"The Lucknow Disease
Linguistic malady befalling seekers at neo-advaita satsangs, from a manner of speech first observed in Lucknow, India in the early 1990's. It is characterized by never using the word "I." Avoidance of the "I-word" is to demonstrate to one's self but mostly to others that there is no longer any ego or sense of self here. Instead of using the word "I" in sentences, Lucknow Disease sufferers say things like "This form is going to the bathroom." The irony of the Lucknow Disease is that it only strikes when the person's sense of self is present and poorly integrated. It has never been observed in those whose sense of self is well-integrated - or absent." - Greg Goode

Vases, canvas, bucklers, armies, forests, garlands, trees
houses, chariots, hostelries, and all such things
that common people designate dependent on their parts,
accept as such. For Buddha did not quarrel with the world!
—— Candrakīrti. MAV 6:166

“You recognize and stabilize.

Dzogchen does not negate conventions such as our nominal identity as an agent who can engage in activity.

Identity is negated ultimately, through the cessation of the conditioned mind, however we are still free to implement conventional distinctions.

Otherwise we end up like neo-Advaita. Saying “who recognizes? Who is there to stabilize? No one wakes up.” These are unnecessary statements if the teaching is understood correctly.” - Kyle Dixon, 2019

Answering someone’s question on “what is it that realizes emptiness?” Kyle Dixon wrote,

“This used to confuse me as well, but really when it comes to insights and realizations of this nature, you can insert your conventional designation of choice.

I, you, he, she, they, them, the mind, consciousness, etc., I’ve even seen an excerpt Malcolm shared which said prajñā is the “realizer.”

Conventions serve to indicate functions accurate to the characteristic, process or entity they are designating. The convention is a tool for communication and given that we are already functioning on the premise that everything is empty, the convention in question is ultimately treated as an inference. Therefore there is freedom to employ whatever convention is fitting to the context, as long as it is accurate in its application.

In this sense you can say the conventional identity realizes emptiness and this is not an assertion that actually reifies said identity.

In another context the inclusion of an agent, identity or entity related to the realization of emptiness is also extraneous. The process of delusion and the cessation of delusion is in one sense, a completely agentless process.

Hence the famous “Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is defiled by incoming defilements [...] Luminous, monks, is the mind. And it is freed from incoming defilements.”

There truly is just the presence or absence of afflictive factors, which obstruct cognition of the nature of phenomena when present, and do not obstruct when absent. The identity is a secondary imputation that arises as the result of the appearance of a seemingly personal reference point once affliction is present. But a conventionally useful identity which can perform conventional actions and have conventional realizations of emptiness just the same.”

(Also see Stage 6 sub-chapter on **Conceptual and Dependent Designation**)

“Would an arahant say "I" or "mine"?

Other devas had more sophisticated queries. One deva, for example, asked the Buddha if an arahant could use words that refer to a self:

"Consummate with taints destroyed,
One who bears his final body,
Would he still say 'I speak'?
And would he say 'They speak to me'?"

This deva realized that arahantship means the end of rebirth and suffering by uprooting mental defilements; he knew that arahants have no belief in any self or soul. But he was puzzled to hear monks reputed to be arahants continuing to use such self-referential expressions.

The Buddha replied that an arahant might say "I" always aware of the merely pragmatic value of common terms:

"Skillful, knowing the world's parlance,
He uses such terms as mere expressions."

The deva, trying to grasp the Buddha's meaning, asked whether an arahant would use such expressions because he is still prone to conceit. The Buddha made it clear that the arahant has no delusions about his true nature. He has uprooted all notions of self and removed all traces of pride and conceit:

"No knots exist for one with conceit cast off;
For him all knots of conceit are consumed.
When the wise one has transcended the conceived
He might still say 'I speak,'
And he might say 'They speak to me.'
Skillful, knowing the world's parlance,
He uses such terms as mere expressions." (KS I, 21-22; SN 1:25)” -
https://www.accesstoinsight.org/lib/authors/jootla/wheel414.html

The Buddha was seen to use personal pronouns much of the time, including right after his awakening, while proclaiming his unsurpassed awakening to a bypasser:

“...On the way not far from Gayâ the Buddha was met by Upaka, an ascetic who, struck by the serene appearance of the Master, inquired: "Who is your teacher? Whose teaching do you profess?"

The Buddha replied: "I have no teacher, one like me does not exist in all the world, for I am the Peerless Teacher, the Arahat. I alone am Supremely Enlightened. Quenching all defilements, Nibbâna’s calm have I attained. I go to the city of Kâsi (Benares) to set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma. In a world where blindness reigns, I shall beat the Deathless Drum."

"Friend, you then claim you are a universal victor," said Upaka. The Buddha replied: "Those who have attained the cessation of defilements, they are, indeed, victors like me. All evil have I vanquished. Hence I am a victor."

Upaka shook his head, remarking sarcastically, "It may be so, friend," and took a bypath...” - http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/buddhism/bud_lt13.htm

“Buddha never used the term "self" to refer to an unconditioned, permanent, ultimate entity. He also never asserted that there was no conventional "self," the subject of transactional discourse. So, it is very clear in the sutras that the Buddha negated an ultimate self and did not negate a conventional self.” – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2020

“Anatman is the negation of an unconditioned, permanent, ultimate entity that moves from one temporary body to another. It is not the negation of "Sam," "Fred," or "Jane" used as a conventional designation for a collection of aggregates. Since the Buddha clearly states in many Mahāyāna sūtras, "all phenomena" are not self, and since everything is included there, including buddhahood, therefore, there are no phenomena that can be called a self, and since there are nothing outside of all phenomena, a "self," other than an arbitrary designation, does not exist.”

- Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith

“**RICHARD:** I do not use the actualism method ... never have and never will (it was the identity in residence all those years ago who did).

RESPONDENT: *Then who was it that just made the above statement?*

RICHARD: This flesh and blood body wrote the above words.

RESPONDENT: *Who is this ‘I’ you are referring to if is not the identity which has left the ‘building’ ‘all those years ago’.*

RICHARD: The first person pronoun is used to refer to this flesh and blood body for both the sake of convenience and to avoid being unduly pedantic ... the above sentence, for example, would look like this otherwise:

- [example only]: ‘This flesh and blood body does not use the actualism method ... never has and never will (it was the identity in residence all those years ago who did)’. [end example].

RESPONDENT: *It can only be identity as without it you could not have even made that statement.*

RICHARD: Ha ... this flesh and blood body will draw your attention to what this flesh and blood body wrote to you in the second e-mail, of this thread, which this flesh and blood body posted only nine days before you sent this one:

> • [Respondent]: '... we either exist or we don't exist it can't be both, so from the evidence we have its obvious that we exist as a body and also as an awareness entity.
> • [Richard]: 'A flesh and blood body can be aware (aka conscious) sans an entity ... indeed it is the altruistic 'self'-immolation of that entity, in toto, which enables the already always existing peace-on-earth to be apparent.
> Concomitant to the total demise of that entity all that which you ask about further above [now snipped] also ceases to exist ... as does all gods/goddesses (by whatever name).
> It is all so clean, clear, and pure, here in this actual world'.

"**RESPONDENT:** *You still use the pronoun 'I' – hmm.*

RICHARD: Yes ... I am this flesh and blood body being apperceptively aware. As such, I am alive and breathing and until the day I die I will continue to make use of the words that existed long before I was born ... words like <Richard> and <I> and <me> and <my> and so on. I am sure it has not missed your eagle eye that I follow the sensible convention of putting the identity pronoun ('I' and 'me' and 'my' and so on) in little quotes so as to forestall confusion. I could have said: 'One has said, over and over again, that 'I' as ego and 'me' as soul (the 'identity' is the 'image-maker' in K-speak) is extinct and that the intuitive/imaginative faculty has vanished'. But, of course, when I do use the word <one> on this Mailing List there is often some clever person asking who this 'one' is ... so it does not really matter much which word I use. I suppose I could say: 'The speaker has said, over and over again ...' if that would please you. What was the point you were making?

RESPONDENT: *Simply that you are a walking – I mean talking – contradiction of terms.*

RICHARD: Where are the *'contradiction of terms*? The word <Richard> is a convenient human agreement to refer to the flesh and blood body that the name appertains to. The word <I> is a convenient human agreement for the flesh and blood body called <Richard> to use when referring to the flesh and blood body that the name <Richard> appertains to. Would it be better to say: 'Yes ... Richard is this flesh and blood body being apperceptively aware. As such, Richard is alive and breathing and until the day Richard dies Richard will continue to make use of the words that existed long before Richard was born ... words like <Richard> and <I> and <me> and <my> and so on. Richard is sure it has not missed your eagle eye that Richard follows the sensible convention of putting the identity pronoun ('I' and 'me' and 'my' and so on) in little quotes so as to forestall confusion. Richard could have said: 'Richard has said, over and over again, that 'I' as ego and 'me' as soul (the 'identity' is the 'image-maker' in K-speak) is extinct and that the intuitive/imaginative faculty has vanished'?

Is this, if not dim-witted, objection of yours a remonstration somehow linked to your re-write of the dictionaries, perchance?" - http://actualfreedom.com.au

08/03/2011

John Tan: It is like saying there is only aggregates. No aggrandisement at all. It is a way of attempting to get grounded to the most fundamental facts so that there is no abstraction or reification. A way of anchoring PCEs. It is similar to getting oneself grounded in the here and now. But I do not

want to comment about AF. Do not want you to create unnecessary problems.

-----Original Message-----
From: Soh Wei Yu
Sent: Monday, March 07, 2011 6:16 PM
To: Thusness
Subject: You are body, not mountain

Hi, what is richard trying to point out here by saying you are not the world? That there is no cosmic consciousness?

RESPONDENT: 'There is nothing but x'; substitute for 'x' any term ...
RICHARD: Okay ... as you say 'any term' here is what I report looks like under your schemata:
. [example only]: 'There is nothing but this actual world. You are this actual world'.
Now, as this actual world is the world of this body...the world of the mountains and the streams...and so on and so on...what you are saying is that you are everything... whereas I say I am this flesh and blood body only (sans identity in toto).
There is no such self-aggrandisement...(there is no identity in actuality).
And this is truly wonderful.

Sent from my HTC

Active No-Self vs Passive No-Self

After realization of anatta, there is the passive no-self of experiencing non-dual anatta clarity in all six senses, but there is a further phase where there is the no-self in actions and activities which in its mature phase will lead to total exertion (see Stage 6 subchapter on total exertion for more details).

“Next step is not to stagnate in no-self and engage wholly and completely into actions and activities then "satori" has no entry or exit; when the thunder claps, the whole of "satori" is actualized!” - Soh, 2011, https://www.dharmaoverground.org/discussion/-/message_boards/message/2425755

“10/20/2012 9:51 AM: Thusness: What is non-meditation to you? And what is non-action?
10/20/2012 10:46 AM: AEN: Non meditation is simply experiencing experience as it appears without dualistic/inherent view which is rather similar to what Mr. J is saying I think
10/20/2012 10:58 AM: Thusness: What do you mean by experiencing experience as it appears without dualistic/inherent view?

10/20/2012 11:00 AM: Thusness: If I ask you to take a deep breath now and then breath normal, are they non-action and non-meditation?
10/20/2012 11:01 AM: AEN: Yes
10/20/2012 11:01 AM: Thusness: Why so?
10/20/2012 11:02 AM: AEN: It is just experience in its natural state, without the sense of self or dualistic action arising
10/20/2012 11:02 AM: Thusness: Natural state refers to?
10/20/2012 11:03 AM: AEN: Appearance appearing according to conditions, unmodified and unaltered by dualistic action/sense of self
10/20/2012 11:04 AM: Thusness: That you are talking about no-doership. What if there is intention, as in chanting
10/20/2012 11:05 AM: AEN: There is no problem with intention, bcos that too is an arising without self... Its like total exertion in every moment, total action without self, whether chanting, walking, sitting. An arising without self meaning? As in no-doership... You have to be clear...
10/20/2012 11:07 AM: AEN: There is total involvement of all conditions, just without agency. Conditions include intention
10/20/2012 11:08 AM: Thusness: Total is always void of self. When there is no gap between actor and action, that is non-action. Lot of movement in appearance but nothing truly moves. When the one who will is gone (no-will), the entire movement appears to be "your willing". It is not about no-doership and arising spontaneously but doer and deeds are refined till none in total action.
10/20/2012 11:18 AM: AEN: Yes there is no standing back watching action unfold but instead whole being is just action, no self
10/20/2012 11:18 AM: Thusness: When insight of anatta arises, the heat and cold "kill you" is the actualization non-action.
10/20/2012 11:18 AM: Thusness: Yes
10/20/2012 11:20 AM: AEN: Ic.. I think only zen emphasizes this very much. Like the seung sahn tradition
10/20/2012 11:21 AM: Thusness: Dogen
10/20/2012 11:21 AM: Thusness: No...Theravada also when understood correctly. This total exertion is not the result of effort, but full integration of view/experience/realization
10/20/2012 11:24 AM: AEN: I was reading walpola rahula book
10/20/2012 11:24 AM: AEN: He said
10/20/2012 11:25 AM: Thusness: When we say this arising thought is just a thought, don't believe in the story...or this thought is empty...nothing to hold...that is only half understanding. The other half is the total exertion of this thought
10/20/2012 11:27 AM: AEN: Ic..
10/20/2012 11:27 AM: AEN: "Mindfulness, or awareness, does not mean that you should think and be conscious 'I am doing this' or 'I am doing that.' No. Just the contrary. The moment you think, 'I am doing this,' you become self-conscious, and then you do not live in the action, but you live in the idea 'I am,' and consequently your work too is spoiled.

"You should forget yourself completely, and lose yourself in what you do. The moment a speaker becomes self-conscious and thinks 'I am addressing an audience,' his speech is disturbed and his trend of thought broken. But when he forgets himself in his speech, in his subject, then he is at his best, he speaks well and explains things clearly.
All great work -- artistic, poetic, intellectual or spiritual -- is produced at those moments when its creators are lost completely in their actions, when they forget themselves altogether, and are free from self-consciousness.
10/20/2012 11:27 AM: Thusness: All past/present/future tendencies, ignorance, wisdom is in this one thought...
10/20/2012 11:30 AM: AEN: This mindfulness or awareness with regard to our activities, taught by the Buddha, is to live in the present moment, to live in the present action (this is also the Zen way which is based primarily on this teaching.) Here in this form of meditation, you haven't got to perform any particular action in order to develop mindfulness, but you have only to be mindful and aware of whatever you may do. You haven't got to spend one second of your precious time on this particular 'meditation': you have only to cultivate mindfulness and awareness always, day and night, with regard to all activities in your usual daily life. These two forms of 'meditation' discussed above are connected with our body."
10/20/2012 11:30 AM: Thusness: Yes...and insight of anatta opens the gate.
10/20/2012 11:32 AM: AEN: Ic.. Delma tells me today her total exertion has stabilized
10/20/2012 11:34 AM: AEN: "Interesting times. Nondual is becoming more and more stable. I don't understand it, but just reading your material and deeply contemplating it seems to have tremendous affect. Yesterday while driving home from work and walking to my house, there was just walking, just driving. This was is what is becoming more and more sustained.

I do follow your advice and follow the breath without counting. Then there is only breath. It's more effortless these days. So, thank you.
10/20/2012 11:34 AM: AEN: luminosity, but not awareness as a thing or entity. just the senses, experienced as independent streams. It's the walking experience which seems different and sustained. No one is walking. At first this would be experienced with a bit of effort, but it's becoming more natural and the feeling of it always having been this way is there."
10/20/2012 11:38 AM: Thusness: Quite good. When the gap between actor and action is refined till none, that is non-action and that non-action is total action. Whether this total action is understood as the natural way will depend on whether the insight of anatta has arisen. Anatta is the insight that allows the practitioner to see clearly that this has always been the case.

.....

Hi James, I think after realizing anatta, the super-clarity of mindfulness becomes sort of effortless and uncontrived. Pure natural aliveness and crystal clarity in all six senses. Isn't it the case for you? So any kind of contrivance becomes counterproductive. But if you try to practice mindfulness before penetrating no-self, it is quite effortful to maintain. This is because clarity is intrinsic to mind/experience rather than being produced, only the sense of self is 'obscuring'.

Also the non-action that Thusness said is not merely 'no doer, everything just happening, just being done' but total involvement, total action, entire being is just action, so intention and effort is fully exerted to do what is being done. It is not a contrived effort like "trying to maintain a witness of what is being done", no. No contrived mindfulness is involved. I'm talking about full exertion in just doing that activity like the whole being, whole universe is fully exerting as the action, eating the apple, cleaning the stain off the toilet. Intention is fully included/involved in that moment, rather than dissociated/a kind of "let things happen on their own".

Whole body-mind is engaged in seeing, hearing, acting: "When you see forms or hear sounds fully engaging body-and-mind, you grasp things directly. Unlike things and their reflections in the mirror, and unlike the moon and its reflection in the water, when one side is illumined the other side is dark." - Dogen

When there is total action, that is also non action because there is no doer-deed dichotomy, whole being is just action and there is no doer or acting or even movement.” - Soh, 2012, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/10/total-exertion_20.html

“What you said is very good. I was reminded of a discussion I just had with Thusness about a new book by Tony Parsons called "This Freedom".

I asked Thusness what freedom is. Freedom is not doing what one likes, that would be still self-view. It is also not just simply being unentangled within the paradigm of duality of subject/object, life/death division.
The realization of anatta and emptiness relinquishes the self and reified constructs, consequently artificial boundaries and hindrance are also dissolved.

When artificial constructs are dissolved, the natural, primordial and untainted are also spontaneously manifested in every engagement. If it is not, then one risks the danger of still being entangled in a non-dual ultimate and drowned in stagnant water. Hence there is a difference in understanding non-dual free from the framework of duality and the actualization of the non-dual realization as the spontaneity of action that is full of energy and compassion.

So as Thusness pointed out to me, freedom must be realized not simply as non-attachment but also as boundless expression that is full of life and power.

Therefore not only the path of non-attachment is seen clearly but the way of boundless compassion and powerful viriya (energy) must also be directly felt and lived. Not immobilized by artificial constructs and duality, action is natural and spontaneous; without self, there is no hesitation and obstruction.

If one only sees freedom as non-attachment, then one will have missed an enormous part of the experiential insight of anatta and will not understand why Mipham is so insistent on talking about the positive attributes of Buddha, yet not falling into the views of Shentong.

For example when Thusness asked me what fear is, my answer had mostly to do with the mental/psychological factors and attachment. However what Thusness want me to see is that fear is not only overcome by non-attachment but also by the feeling of unbounded life and energy.
Btw, do you do yoga or any form of energy practice?” – Soh, 2016

Possible Dangers and Sidetracks of Stage 5

- Falling into reification of the physical like Actual Freedom teachings:

After Anatta, luminous radiance or aliveness is naturally experienced in the foreground as everything: mountains, rivers, sky, etc. The luminosity becomes natural, effortless and very intense, however the tendency to reify the physical body and physical world as truly existing, solid, inherent is strong.

“I am the universe’s experience of itself. The limpid and lucid perfection and purity of being here now, as-I-am, is akin to the crystalline perfection and purity seen in a dew-drop hanging from the tip of a leaf in the early-morning sunshine; the sunrise strikes the transparent dew-drop with its warming rays, highlighting the flawless correctness of the tear-drop shape with its bellied form. One is left almost breathless with wonder at the immaculate simplicity so exemplified ... and everyone I have spoken with has experienced this impeccable purity and perfection in some way or another at varying stages in their life... ...‘Where you say ‘the outside world’ again you are speaking of the reality which the identity within creates ... in actuality one does not perceive the world ‘by our senses’ as one is the senses. The whole point of actualism is the direct experience of actuality: as this flesh and blood body only what one is (what not ‘who’) is these eyes seeing, these ears hearing, this tongue tasting, this skin touching and this nose smelling – and no separative identity (no ‘I’/ ‘me’) means no separation – whereas ‘I’/ ‘me’, a psychological/ psychic entity, am inside the body busily creating an inner world and an outer world and looking out through ‘my’ eyes upon ‘my’ outer world as if looking out through a window, listening to ‘my’ outer world through ‘my’ ears as if they were microphones, tasting ‘my’ outer world through ‘my’ tongue, touching ‘my’ outer world through ‘my’ skin and smelling ‘my’ outer world through ‘my’ nose ... plus adding all kinds of emotional/ psychological baggage to what is otherwise the bare sensory experience of the flesh and blood body. That identity (‘I’/ ‘me’) is forever cut-off from the actual ... from the world as-it-is.” “Everything and everyone has a lustre, a brilliance, a vividness, an intensity and a marvellous, wondrous vitality that makes everything alive and sparkling ... even the very earth beneath one’s feet. The rocks, the concrete buildings, a piece of paper ... literally everything is as if it were alive.”, “this actual world (the sensate world) which is the world of this body and that body and every body; the world of the mountains and the streams; the world of the trees and the flowers; the world of the clouds in the sky by day and the stars in the firmament by night and so on and so on ad infinitum” “This physical universe exists in its own right”, “Only this, the actual world, genuinely exists.” - Actual Freedom teachings founder Richard Maynard

“U.G. Krishnamurti: The eyes are like a very sensitive camera. The physiologists say that light reflected off objects strikes the retina of the eye and the sensation goes through the optic nerve to the brain. The faculty of sight, of seeing, is simply a physical phenomenon. It makes no difference to the eyes whether they are focused on a snow-capped mountain or on a garbage can: they produce sensations in exactly the same way. the eyes look on everyone and everything without discrimination. You have a feeling that there is a 'cameraman' who is directing the eyes. But left to themselves -- when there is no 'cameraman' -- the eyes do not linger, but are moving all the time. They are drawn by the things outside. Movement attracts them, or brightness or a color which stands out from whatever is around it. There is no 'I' looking; mountains, flowers, trees, cows, all look at me. The consciousness is like a mirror, reflecting whatever is there outside.

The depth, the distance, the color, everything is there, but there is nobody who is translating these things. Unless there is a demand for knowledge about what I am looking at, there is no separation, no distance from what is there. It may not actually be possible to count the hairs on the head of someone sitting across the room, but there is a kind of clarity which seems as if I could.

...

Q: I think I am beginning to see what ...

U.G.: You are blind. You see nothing. When you actually do see and perceive for the first time that there is no self to realize, no psyche to purify, no soul to liberate, it will come as a tremendous shock to that instrument. You have invested everything in that--the soul, mind, psyche, whatever you wish to call it--and suddenly it is exploded as a myth. It is difficult for you to look at reality, at your actual situation. One look does the trick; you are finished.

Q: It is radical, and perhaps a little dangerous, to call the spirit, the soul, and God the shoddy inventions of frightened minds, is it not?

U.G.: I don't care. I am ready to go. I don't see anything other than the physical activity of the body. Spirituality is the invention of the mind, and the MIND IS A MYTH. Your traditions are choking you. But, unfortunately, you don't do anything. You actually love being choked. You love the burden of the cultural garbage-sack, the dead refuse of the past. It has to drop away naturally. It just drops. You don't depend upon knowledge anymore, except as a useful tool to function sanely in this world. Wanting has to go. Wanting to be free from something that is not there is what you call "sorrow". Wanting to be free from sorrow is sorrow. There is no other sorrow. You don't want to be free from sorrow. You just think about sorrow, without acting. Your thinking endlessly about being free from sorrow is only more material for sorrow. It (thinking) does not put an end to sorrow. Sorrow is there for you as long as you think. There is actually no sorrow there to be free from. Thinking about and struggling against "sorrow" is sorrow. Since you can't stop thinking, and thinking is sorrow, you will always suffer. There is no way out, no escape ...” - U.G. Krishnamurti

“I like U.G. Krishnamurti’s descriptions. The problem with UG is that he never offered a practical way for people to realize what he realized. It is doubtful that any of his "followers" have realized his message at all. At least with Actual Freedom, by today 10+ people have realized that state of "Actual Freedom" of Richard Maynard because they offered a practical method. UG's state is similar to Actual Freedom, they have gone into anatta [dissolved self/Self] but fallen into the extreme of reifying the physical. Even Actual Freedom Richard claimed back then that UGK comes closest to what he has to report, although not identical. Also, Awakening to Reality has led even more people to realizing anatta.

And of course, whatever paths in Buddhadharma -- Theravada, Zen, Dzogchen, Mahamudra, all these offers viable paths and many of them traversing these paths have attained realization. This is why I'm/we are writing a guide based on 'Awakening to Reality' blog, for those so inclined to practice according to it.

I'm a pragmatist and believe for whatever (spiritual) teachings out there to remain viable and relevant, it must have the potency and ability to produce similar awakenings in others to maximize its benefits to humanity, otherwise it remains a dogma or ideology to merely believe or follow.” - Soh, 2019

After initial breakthrough of seeing through and dissolving the self/Self, the physical flesh and blood body and universe can seem solid, tangible and truly existing. It is possible to remedy this by penetrating the construct of ‘physical’ and ‘mind-body’ into the bare sensations that make up the moment of experience. Even the term ‘sensation’ can become another construct, so be careful of that. A useful way of contemplating experientially/vipassanically would be to deconstruct the physical world and the mind and body into the sensory qualities of the five elements in direct experience. This leads to deconstruction of physical + mind-body drop. But even this is not yet the realization of Emptiness [Thusness Stage 6].

“In the Pali literature, the mahabhuta ("great elements") or catudhatu ("four elements") are earth, water, fire and air. In early Buddhism, the four elements are a basis for understanding suffering and for liberating oneself from suffering. The earliest Buddhist texts explain that the four primary material elements are the sensory qualities solidity, fluidity, temperature, and mobility; their characterization as earth, water, fire, and air, respectively, is declared an abstraction—instead of concentrating on the fact of material existence, one observes how a physical thing is sensed, felt, perceived.[8]"” (Wiki)

“This world of actualities is something quite definitely differentiated. It is this that is found confronting us, and we take it at its face value. Even the idea of the six 'Greats' [great elements] is an assumption placed at the back of sense actualities; they are the outcome of logical inference. The Shingon world is therefore the same as our sense world, i.e., where we have form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and the laws existing among sense-objects.” - Shingon Buddhism, Kukai and Total Exertion

“First emptying of self/Self does not necessarily lead to illusion-like experience of reality. It does however allows experience to become vivid, luminous, direct and non-dual... ...First emptying may also lead a practitioner to be attached to an 'objective' world or turns physical. The 'dualistic' tendency will resurface after a period of few months so it is advisable to monitor one's progress for a few months.” - John Tan, 2012, Advice for Taiyaki

"AF is part of the deviation *(Soh: of Phase 5)* looking into purely physical flesh and blood of pure experience... Some went into details some does not" - John Tan, 2013

John Tan has undergone a phase initially after his realization of anatta where he became very “physical”.

“Also John Tan told me a few times many years ago when I met him privately that he has gone through the Actual Freedom phase by his own practice without having read about actual freedom. That is, during his earlier years in anatta, he has gone through a phase where everything is very physical, and there was a sense that he was no different from cats and dogs and trees, physically. It even led to a sense of despair or existential angst. Interestingly, I later found out that AF

Richard has also went through a period of existential angst in his earlier years after attaining AF, but I am not sure if it is the same thing. However, Richard often talks about the cats, dogs, trees, carrots being of the same stuff as his [physical] existence as the body only (not exact words but something like that), which was similar to how John Tan described that period for him.

Personally I don't recall having been stuck in that condition (extremely physical and existential angst), or even if I had it was not for long, perhaps due to the aid of right view (emptiness + dependent origination). My guess is that (and John Tan would agree) not everyone will go through sidetracks like AF Richard or U.G. Krishnamurti after anatta. E.g. Kyle's insight of anatta was followed shortly with realization of emptiness due to the help of right view.” - Soh, 2019

“(Is your experience now) more physical or like awareness become like a gust of wind or reflection, or holographic?” - John Tan, 2013

“Yes and very good. There is a very big difference between substantialist non-dual of One-Mind and what you said. In this experience, there is no background reality. It is not about the background Awareness but rather the foreground aggregates that you are talking about - A thought. There is just aggregates that are like foams, bubbles, ethereal having all the same taste without substantiality and implicitly non-dual. No sense of body, mind and the world, nothing actual or truly there.

Before, when insight of anatta first arose, you still risk the danger of seeing the physical as inherent and truly existing. Therefore there is a period that you are lost, unsure and AF (Actual Freedom) seems appealing - a sign that you have not extended the insight of emptiness to phenomena though you kept saying twofold emptiness.

At present you focus on the following:
1. When there is no cold or heat *(Soh: See glossary at the bottom of the article)*
2. Total exertion

For 1, it is not difficult to understand now but for 2, you have not directly or adequately replace the 'Self/self' with the interdependence of whatever arises.” - John Tan, 06/12/2011 E-mail

“André, to me anatta is a very specific and definite phase of seeing through the background self/Self quite thoroughly at least in the waking state but there is a tendency that experience can somehow turn very "physical, sense-based and causal" for me.

Every experience is direct, gapless, non-dual, non-conceptual and radiance even total exertion is present, just not empty. Almost equivalent to Actual Freedom as narrated by Richard. In fact I find Richard's description very much my version of arahat 🤣. (Comments by Soh: It should not be taken literally, but rather as a resemblance in certain aspects. Richard's experience does not qualify as Stream Entry in Buddhism, let alone Arahatship. The distinction is explained in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2025/09/buddhist-vs-non-buddhist-views-and.html)

For Kyle, due to his view in emptiness, the experiential insight of anatta not only pierce through the self/Self but also triggered the arising insight of emptiness. However this may not be true (imo) in most cases if one's view isn't firmly established. For me when I first encountered the chariot analogy, there is an immediate and intuitive recognition that it is referring to anatta but I am unable to grasp the essence of the phrase "emptiness and non-arisen" there and then.

In other words, in addition to self immolation, a specific insight must arise, it is the prajna that clearly sees through the referent is empty and non-arisen. So anatta I would say is about severing the self/Self whereas phase 6 is the blossoming of this specific insight. Extending this insight from self to phenomena, from conventions to magical appearances is then a natural progression.

As for first bhumi *(Soh: related: [insight] [buddhism] A reconsideration of the meaning of "Stream-Entry" considering the data points of both pragmatic Dharma and traditional Buddhism , Definition of First Bhumi)* I am seriously not sure and never thought of it.

I can only say if we practice long enough, there is a frequent occurrence of a clear, clean and pure spring of joy that emerges from nowhere, floating like cloud. A very helpful antidote for negative emotions.

Even the experience of drinking water is like experiencing a clean and pure stream of luminous sensations in zero dimension similar to a mirage flowing spring water floating in the air.” - John Tan in the Awakening to Reality Discussion Group, 2019, John wrote this maybe a month or two before a breakthrough that Soh had which led to the writing “The Magical Fairytale-like Wonderland and Paradise of this Verdant Earth Free from Affective Emotions, Reactions and Sufferings”

“Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Cheng Chen
JT only knew about actualism in 2009. By then he already realised emptiness, as in twofold emptiness, for several years. so nope he didnt take a detour with actualism. But he did undergo a very physicalist phase post anatta for a few years before realization of twofold emptiness, all on his own. In this phase it was the same as AF but he didnt know about AF then
For me I didnt really undergo a very physical phase
□ □ Reply
□ 12h
□ Edited”

“Soh: as Richard said, the out of control experience can happen even before anatta (the complete dissolution of self/Self), that is why the "doer" dissolves but the "be-er" is still there, but in actual freedom both dissolves

John Tan: Quite acute insight and thorough for the state no mind. Means "being" is also deconstructed.”

(Soh: For those wondering what Actual Freedom is referring to:

See A Brief Personal History (of Richard Maynard of Actual Freedom) and Peace on this Earth: Actual Freedom and Actual Freedom and Buddhism)

While writing this document in early 2019, Soh had a breakthrough that resembles some of the things in the Actual Freedom webpages. It is not different from the previous anatta breakthrough but much more intense, and it felt like a mutation of consciousness/brain/body has taken place and the incredible aliveness and infinitude of the total exertion of the universe is now an ongoing natural state. In fact AF descriptions are no more a mystery to me, it has become my permanent state, although I do not consider it as thorough as what I (Soh) am currently experiencing on a daily basis due to their lack of penetration to Stage 6 Emptiness.

“**The Magical Fairytale-like Wonderland and Paradise of this Verdant Earth Free from Affective Emotions, Reactions and Sufferings**

Picture: Hawaii

Just now while jogging.. while looking at the trees I suddenly recalled some of my peak experiences of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) many years ago, even before anatta was realized in 2010.. (although anatta realization was a crucial key that made this all effortless and natural) the wow factor that arise from the marveling at the wondrous and magical quality of everything and it occurred to me that the wondrous and magical quality is very much present as every vivid actuality of all forms even now except without the aspect of astonishment as it has become a natural quality of experience. It is all so naturally magical, marvelous, and wondrous like I am literally living in a paradise, but without any 'fireworks' or sense that some special event is happening. It is an all-encompassing (and non-metaphysical/non-ontological/non-subjective) Pristine/Pure Awareness completely devoid of a center or boundary, devoid of a self/Self/agent/perceiver/doer/be-er radiating as none other than the very textures and colors and sounds and

sensations from moment to moment. The actuality of everything, trees, sky, ground, people, things and events, are revealed in each moment as magical, wonderful, marvelous, alive and vivid beyond description as in being magical and wondrous like actually living in a fairy-tale like paradise without the slightest trace of a self/Self, agent, doer, be-er, being, or the slightest division of a subject and object. Everything (colors/smells/sounds/sensations/touch/thoughts) has a sparkling intensity and brilliance of aliveness that simply stands out.

People not familiar might on first glance think I am describing some special altered state of consciousness unnaturally induced through the ingestion of a psychedelic drug or through some intensive meditative or yogic technique, but I can assure you this is now my everyday and every moment sober, natural, spontaneous and effortless state of experience.

This aspect of a PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) or an Actual Freedom is quite well described by the Actual Freedom teachings (which I have been revisiting recently while helping to write the Awakening to Reality guide), except I would not make ontological statements about the physical universe as I do not have notions of inherent existence with regards to a physical universe out there. The infinitude (boundlessness) of the universe participating in this very spontaneous breathing and activity is experientially actualized as a state of total exertion, with no sense of solidity or inherency involved, therefore I am free from any such views as rejected by the Buddha in the Culamalunkya Sutta as I do not make ontological assertions of some eternal and infinite universe that inherently exists out there, nor is there the slightest sense that a soul exists at all.

Then it also occurred to me that those very familiar with anatta shouldn’t be unfamiliar with total exertion and conditionality (though the view aspect of dependent origination seems missing in teachings like AF), for there is thoroughgoing and cosmic relativity (as in a completely seamless activity that is conventionally expressed as relative origination) in anatta without the slightest trace of an Absolute. It is in this sense of total exertion and thoroughgoing relativity and exertion where the entire universe is participating in every single activity including jogging and breathing, that teachings like Hua-Yen makes sense, however I have to say that I do not have the slightest trace of a metaphysical reality, a noumenon, a Being or a framework of that sort in my consciousness, as my state of consciousness is constantly completely devoid of a self or a Self. And this is why when writings surface recently about noumenon/phenomenon, being, etc, I have to say, those terms resonate with my earlier stages of realisation but my current state is nothing of that kind, there is nothing like that in anatta.

A thought did cross my mind just now -- if Actual Freedom's Richard reads Zen Master Dogen's teachings, he might find some of them resonating, but I did not find any reference to Zen Master Dogen's works in Actual Freedom's website. E.g. http://dogenandtheshobogenzo.blogspot.com/2010/08/existence-time-emptiness-of-what.html , also among many things Soto Zen (Dogen’s lineage teachers) teachers write, Shinshu Roberts wrote the following, “Since our activity is not a progression from delusion to enlightenment made solely by the independent self, Dogen defines the first thought of practice as 'immediate present ultimate Dharma' or genjokoan: the presence and perfection of all dharmas as they are in the here-and-now.' Hee-Jin Kim further explains the meaning of genjokoan:

'It does not suggest an evolutionary ascent from hidden-ness to manifestation, or from imperfection to perfection, or conversely, an emanational descent from one to many, or from reality to appearance. Rather, things, events, beings are already unmistakably what they truly are; what is more, they are vibrant, transparent, and bright in their as-they-are-ness.'"

This state of consciousness is devoid of affective emotional imposition on the purity and perfection of the experience. Everything is clean, perfect, wonderful, marvelous and alive, without the additional layer of obscurity that consists of the solidifying of a self/Self with its incumbent habitual (or what Richard calls "instinctual") affective reactions, emotional reactions. For example just now while listening to the baby crying, the crying is incredibly "actual" just as the trees and rivers and buildings are "actual" - not in the sense that they are felt as solid, physical and inherently existing, but "actual" in the sense of vividly manifesting in a completely "pristine" and "unsullied" state, the complete actuality of sound unobscured by any trace of emotional or mental reactions, in actual fact completely unsullied by the slightest trace of subjectivity -- only the crying just as it is, vividly heard, with no self/Self or passions or aversions whatsoever.

And this is how the teachings of Buddha in Bahiya Sutta, and its related Malunkyaputta Sutta leads to complete liberation --

"Then, Malunkyaputta, with regard to phenomena to be seen, heard, sensed, or cognized: In reference to the seen, there will be only the seen. In reference to the heard, only the heard. In reference to the sensed, only the sensed. In reference to the cognized, only the cognized. That is how you should train yourself. When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Malunkyaputta, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two. This, just this, is the end of stress."

"Knowing an idea — mindfulness lapsed — attending to the theme of 'endearing,' impassioned in mind, one feels and remains fastened there. One's feelings, born of the idea, grow numerous, Greed & annoyance injure one's mind. Thus amassing stress, one is said to be far from Unbinding. Not impassioned with forms — seeing a form with mindfulness firm — dispassioned in mind, one knows and doesn't remain fastened there. While one is seeing a form — and even experiencing feeling — it falls away and doesn't accumulate. Thus one fares mindfully. Thus not amassing stress, one is said to be in the presence of Unbinding."

- https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN35_95.html

As a sidenote, I am very blissful these days (not the sort of 'emotional' bliss that is contaminated by self/Self, but always a radiant joyfulness springing up spontaneously as a natural ongoing delightfulness of no-self/no-Self, happy and delightful and smiling very often), today even more so.

John Tan always talked about this incredible bliss of anatta, and now it is just like that. E.g. John Tan said in 2006 to

Sim Pern Chong, “Haha...the intuitive experience of non-duality must have made you appreciate deeply the profound teaching of anatta and emptiness. The joy and bliss of total transparency will make us drop from our chairs (it can take a few years)...Happy Journey.” He also said "if longchen can stabilize [anatta] in 3 yrs time, he will be able to enter incredible bliss at will. beyond description. not a form of mundane samadhi". (More: The Incredible Bliss of Anatta)

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Update:

Some of my descriptions from related discussions:

"Strong and vivid radiance..

Even now the smell of food is standing out in intensity

...[sights have a] HD hypervivid quality...

...Actually more accurate description is magical and marvellous colors (as in the vivid 'textures' of what's called trees, sky, houses, people, streets, etc), sounds (as in the vivid 'textures' of a bird chirping, sound of traffic, etc), scents (as in the aromas of food, and plants, etc), etc. Complete perfection with a stark intensity...

Yet feels completely natural. Without slightest sense of distance or self/Self, even the tiniest details becomes starkly clear

This sense of perfection and magical radiance of everything is still there even when I'm physically tired and lack sleep on the previous night

By magical what I mean is a sense that there’s something very magnificent, almost like beauty but it is not beauty vs ugly and is not at all a subjectively imposed or affective feeling of beauty, but a sense of perfection.. like I look at the fly crawling on my skin, the fly is so completely perfect, like part of the paradise (note: this is different from Thusness's usage of the term 'magical')

Like a ball of radiance, except radiance as none other than the boundless world of forms, colors, textures and sounds, that is the very radiance, for it is the world that is the radiance and nothing else. Not a subjective radiance standing apart from forms.

There is nothing subjectively imposed here.. when I say “sense of perfection” that is already not quite accurate as it conveys some subjectively imposed interpretation of perfection.. rather it is the world that is the perfection and each moment carries the flavor of perfection

Perfection being merely a qualitative description of the pristine state of consciousness/radiant forms, not an affective feeling of "it is perfect" but neither is it an objective characteristic of some inherently existing object (there is neither subject nor object as subject and object is conceptual)

But this state of consciousness is not just heightened clarity... it’s like even the trees swaying is marvelously and magically alive and life reveals its significance and meaning all around. I think this is what Richard calls “meaning of life”.

The emotional model of AF makes some sense"

...

Driving around Singapore, it feels like I am experiencing Singapore for the first time.

...

I would also just like to add that this luminosity has always been experienced since anatta 8 years back and as glimpses even before anatta realization, but it's getting more intense after a few events these days. Or as John Tan (Thusness) suggest, some overcoming of the center. He told me he actually expected that I'll experience this a long time ago, but I was late by 2 years from his expectation

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[9:40 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Now I’m walking.. absolutely no self /Self/agency at all.. and the PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) [i.e. the vivid radiance of anatta that 'makes' everything like a wondrous paradise is now my unbroken state] is still there as before but the main characteristic that stands out now is not the radiance but the walking is just infinitude of the universe as the seamless activity.. in the absence of an agent/self/Self there is just this
[9:42 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: [And also the experience comes with a] Very still mind.. except when writing this
[9:42 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Yes don't focus, relax and be light. No self, no center. Don't over do. Learn a somatic technique.
[9:52 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: yea this cosmic sense of centerless ness is different from focused kind of pce.. it’s like PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) is already natural here and makes no sense to focus more.. the cosmic sense of Maha does not require focusing but complete opening without self/Self/agent... it created no tension in my head at all
[9:55 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Yes
[9:57 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Just centerless and without background, light and immense. No focus no concentration. Natural and free.
[9:57 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: And master a somatic technique to release your body and any form of energy imbalance.

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[24/4/19, 3:08:47 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I don’t need to focus on it it’s just there [pce as natural effortless ongoing state, not a peak experience here].. as for the cause.. I think a lot. Like Anatta Realization is crucial yet I already had it 8 years ago
[24/4/19, 3:09:07 PM] John Tan: The cause of pce is just 1. [comments: what John meant here is not just PCE as a peak experience as the term usually refers to, but PCE as an effortless, ongoing, permanent natural state]
[24/4/19, 3:09:12 PM] John Tan: Not a lot
[24/4/19, 3:09:19 PM] Soh Wei Yu: It’s more like a gradual building up of intensity over the past few months
[24/4/19, 3:09:39 PM] John Tan: Pce comes from directness and gapless experience of the obviousness
[24/4/19, 3:09:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Then I remembered and contemplated on the pce state and suddenly triggered a shift. And that triggered like a mutation of my brain, body and consciousness. I mean in addition to anatta insight it’s those factors... I wouldn’t say I had a totally new insight more like intensified actualization. Like some veil gone
[24/4/19, 3:13:35 PM] John Tan: There is no new insight, it is just the insight of anatta. So it is just over emphasis to say it is something more.
[24/4/19, 3:14:28 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Hmm but previously I already had anatta insight yet somehow something prevented that mutation of brain body consciousness lol
[24/4/19, 3:14:38 PM] John Tan: The degree of severing the self can vary but the insight is the same.
[24/4/19, 3:14:40 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I think in addition to the insight I had to go through a process
[24/4/19, 3:14:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yes
[24/4/19, 3:15:49 PM] John Tan: So there is no extra insight only the degree of doing away with that layer that hinders directness and gaplessness. however one can get so excited about the effect that is the issue.
[24/4/19, 3:16:35 PM] Soh Wei Yu: It’s almost like a chakra is open or something.. anatta should do that and maybe for some they get all of it from the start but for me maybe there were obscurations to full blown anatta
[24/4/19, 3:16:57 PM] John Tan: Because [the] cause is not clearly seen their 2 fold cannot be understood clearly
[24/4/19, 3:17:04 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Even now I wouldn’t say no more obscurations.. just lesser. Maybe over years later even more intense
[24/4/19, 3:17:25 PM] John Tan: Still far from full blown. That is over exaggeration again. Even inability to contain is part of it that re-force the sense of self. I have told you how is it possible when the body is so inflamed and congested can one have full blown experience? Does it make sense? If you are fatigued how full blown can it be?
[24/4/19, 3:19:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. yeah. Nowadays I don’t feel much fatigue and yet I sleep less.. but I still have inflammation from time to time

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“Arthur Deller not that it needs a name but that’s what I call interpenetration. What is so beautiful about this is that, like other realization “stages” or fundamental shifts in experiential insight, it is seen to be more primary, natural and spontaneous than what came before. Before meaning sense gates as separate from one another even if explored directly and non conceptually as pristine, complete, self releasing phenomena. As this interpenetration becomes more and

more “just the way it is” it also becomes more intuitively clear that it is uncaused, free and spontaneous. Here a great relaxation is possible. Practice of vigilance gives way to immersion and unfettered enjoyment, but without contraction. That last part is important. Before a thorough examination of the vivid, all encompassing, no-remainder nature of each sense gate (including consciousness), what we think of relaxation is still intertwined with subtle avoidance mechanisms. So then relaxation is related to personal will more than a natural expression of harmonization with the flow of phenomonality (no-gap).” - Angelo Gerangelo

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[8/4/19, 7:19:55 PM] Soh Wei Yu: By the way the other day I was investigating fear.. then I saw how fear is tied to the sense of self that feels like its existence needs to be protected.. but upon investigating that sense of self is completely seen to be a complete delusional fabrication without basis and then released. It seems to improve my fearlessness... ...Also just now I see that everything is total exertion.. even looking at the patch of grass is the body mind universe in total exertion.. so the infinitude should be tasted as a natural state in each moment
[9/4/19, 7:25:01 AM] John Tan: Yes contemplation is a good practice but more importantly is to arise the willinglessness to let go. Not through analysis alone but recognition of the energetic pattern of attachment.

Actually anatta itself is sufficient to dissolve fear, just how deep the insight goes. Ignorance manifests as attachment but it is difficult to uproot as seeing through is only at the surface compare to the aeon lives of attachments and we constantly re-enforce such view. Wrong view and attachments beget each other and one attachment leads to another endlessly. The "willingness" that let go must arise to directly feel the afflictive chain as a form of energetic pattern, analysis itself is insufficient.
[9/4/19, 8:02:54 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. I looked down from tall building over railing.. not much fear.. maybe initially a slight body sensation but nothing like before.. maybe if someone push me I might.. stopped looking after people come out of bunk and I don’t want to look funny 🤣 I like to just stand there looking at the scenery... stillness, boundlessness, trees and horizon

...

“I” am my emotions and fears and the emotions and fears are “me” in the same way that the aggregates are collated into a Self by imputation.. even as there is no agent for any arising including the sense of self which occurs by dependent arising.

The sense of self and emotions and fears as a protective mechanism is not necessary for the optimum functioning of life.. it has served its purpose. Seeing this there is another level of release which seems like a veil has lifted.. there is now a stillness

There is a sense of deep stillness that is the character of the universe.. even as activities, sounds, people walking and everything is happening, everything feels very still. Amidst the centerlessness and boundlessness there is a stillness.. both in the sense of silence and the sense that there is no sense of movement.

Just sitting on the bed... seeing the ceiling, the link door, the fan whirling sound... all these simple things are delightful without any other entertainments. And even seeing the fan is inseparable with the total exertion of my breathing.. the movement of the diaphragm, my eyes, the fan, the wind blowing...

...

Senses are naturally heightened and everything takes on a depth and freshness like you never experienced before. Colors literally appears deeper (takes on a depth that seems psychedelic) and more vibrant, sounds and scents are felt with stark vividness, an energetic pulsation of sensation flows throughout the body, and you can’t help but be in a state of wonderment at the aliveness of the universe. That’s just the radiance aspect. There is also a complete absence of self/Self and only the forms and textures and fabric of the moment are the radiance, nothing else behind or besides as if experiencing things through a separative veil, that hallucinatory separative veil and background self/Self preventing a complete gaplessness and directness and immediacy of the experience of actual that is conventionally called “people, things and events” is realised to be completely delusory and extinguished. Without that hallucinatory veil, the other person you meet, the sun in the distance is seen and experienced to be no more distant than your heartbeat. For no longer do you see yourself as the seer of scenery, in seeing there is just radiant colors, in sensing just sensations without a sensor. This absence of distance and separation is called “actual intimacy” by Richard but a better term would be gaplessness as there is simply no one to “be intimate with” another, there is only another - the actuality of “people, things and events”.

The sense of a self that feels like its existence needs to be protected or feels threatened and fearful or distressed and any other manners of emotional affliction is also seen to be a complete phantasm, a delusional construct without the slightest existence in actuality and thus extinguished, leaving the perfection and purity of the actual and the trees and nature appears as a paradisiacal wonderland full of neverending gladness and delight. You smile more. There is a complete absence of grim and glum in the “actual”, only bright, joyful radiance and peace.

The radiance that is the very forms is always already so but the separative veil and identity prevents the full blossoming of the radiance and infinitude of the universe. This delusional veil of identity dulls out perception of life. It literally dulls our experience in the opposite way that psychedelics heightens it or tunes it up (albeit only temporarily - but once identity is completely relinquished this non-separative heightened perception of life becomes permanent).

This separative veil and identity must be completely seen through as a delusion and completely extinguished without a trace for the permanent actualization of the gapless and direct radiance of the actual and the infinitude of total exertion. In the infinitude of the universe, everything you see and experience is centerless and boundless, even the words on the screen is the exertion of the ten directions and three times (limitless space and limitless time), and yet the universe is at a standstill, a complete stillness or lack of continuity of something or 'myself' over time.

This separative veil and identity is precisely what must be “cleansed” from the “doors of perception” that prevents us from the direct living of the magical wonderland of the actual, such as William Blake have said,

“If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern.”

...

"I’m now at the park.. the infinitude, aliveness, perfection of everything is strong.. but no tenseness. There is the experience that this body and every body and everything is the expression of the infinitude of the universe.. like I am the same stuff as everything, but I do not have the slightest sense of being a universal consciousness [there is no trace of metaphysicality or subjectivity here]. Neither do I reify some solid physical universe existing out there.. it’s just that the experience is like that

There is much joy and wonder.. my eyes are open wide.

The experience is like Richard says, I am the infinite universe experiencing itself as this sensate and reflective body mind. Actually to say the experience is like this is wrong.. as if it implies subjectivity.. to say it is a physical universe out there is wrong.. to say it is universal consciousness is wrong.. yet it is experienced as cosmic exertion

Everything is seamlessly connected.. and interpenetrating. And the seamless infinitude of the universe does not take away the awareness of specific causalities, like I clearly know when an ant is biting my legs, that the pain is linked to the ant biting.

There is no effort at all in this state.. no concentration at all.. in fact concentration will probably spoil the natural boundless perfection

I think I do feel light as a feather and immense as universe..."

...

This state of apperception is effortlessly and naturally present from the very moment I wake up to the moment I sleep, for example when I wake up sometimes a sound is heard and I do not even know where I am (the body is lying on the bed but the mind hasn't cognized that on the very first moment of waking up) in contrast to the bird chirping or the fan humming as there is simply no 'I' to be located anywhere, there is only everything everywhere... it is almost as if I am at the sound of the bird chirping except there is no 'I' to 'be at' or 'be one with' the sound, there is only sound. The reflection of the orange rising sun over the window in the next building shines as vivid radiance with flawless perfection... the radiant energies courses through the body, energising and vitalising my day. All these informs me that it's going to be yet another perfect day in paradise even before I open my eyes. When driving, when walking,

overlooking the long stretch of road over the horizon, there is no center, no reference-point, no center-of-reference, and no circumference... the whole universe is walking, is the walking, is the driving, where the movement of legs is not done or perceived by an 'I' (there is no doer, thinker, feeler, watcher, cognizer, being/Being whatsoever, only action) and this body is walking inseparably from the entire universe, it is not the case that there is a body here and a separate universe out there in which the body moves through.

...

November 2019:

Another thing I think AF is good at pointing out is that the slightest emotional affliction and feeling tone is tied to sense of self (thus the term “feeling being”) and obscures the purity and perfection of the pristine apperceptive awareness of mere forms, colors, sounds, etc. It can be noticed to have a palpable shift even though both feeling tone mode and non feeling tone mode may already be free of duality after realization. Got a better understanding of this point this year from experience.

The very clean, luminous, free, uncontaminated perfection and purity of sensate display without any trace of self/Self and even emotions is now my default state.

The difference is a palpable shift from experience through a subtle feeling tone to completely selfless purity of the luminosity of the vivid silvery colors called table, spoon, and so on.. completely devoid of any sense of self/Self and feelings.

But it is important IMO to breakthrough by insight and realization of anatta first. The rest will follow naturally.

...

December 2019, answering someone on what are the benefits of awakening:

Right now I am sitting on a chair, looking at the lush greenery and flowers with a cup of coffee but my intensity of luminosity as the vivid forms, colors and sounds is as if I am on LSD (I am sober). Everything is just so nice and marvellous and beautiful. I can sit here all day. This is my usual state. Everything is just perfection and purity and intense aliveness and joy and peace.

That being said, the great benefit is that when faced with challenges in life (however i do not wish to discuss the details), I still feel free and unperturbed, there was no emotional reactions. Then i know my practice has been of good use.” - Soh

“Certain descriptions of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) and Actualism are now a very, very close, identical or almost identical description to what I am experiencing intensely on a constant and unbroken basis for the past 1+ month (Update 8 months later: yep, still so, in fact even better now). However, as the Actualists experience an inherently existing, solid and physical universe, it is not completely identical to what I experience, although on the aspect of anatta and total exertion there are similarities. However as Vineeto [an *actually free* individual] informed me, ‘it is my direct experience that trees and rivers and buildings ... and birds and clouds and the entire physical universe are solid, physical and inherently existing.’

For me the world like a car, a car cannot be found to exist as any particular parts (windscreen/engine/doors/etc designated in isolation or separated from each other cannot be asserted as a car on their own), functions (such as driving), and conditions involved in the driving, nor does a car exist in and of itself something apart from those parts, functions and conditions, but depend on these parts and functions and conditions there is the valid convention ‘car’, that ‘car’ is merely imputed in dependence. Therefore the ‘car’ does not ‘inherently exist in and of itself’ as a soul-like essence to be found as a ‘thing’ somewhere, but is imputed in dependence, yet I am not asserting non-existence. Likewise to anything else in the universe. What is experienced in PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) (or what appears to me similar to PCE) to me does not inherently exist with a soul-like substance to be found anywhere, yet is vividly clear, alive, and not in any way subjective (I do not subsume them into a universal subjectivity or consciousness).

I do not experience an inherently existing physical universe, nor do I experience an inherently existing awareness/Self/Brahman. I experience a fourth alternative (to the normal, spiritual/metaphysical, physical). My direct experience is without a who, where, or when, and yet there is not just blankness or nothing. I think spontaneous presencing is a good term. That spontaneous and seamless presencing is not generated by a self/Self and yet is not ‘inherently there in and of itself’, rather it is spontaneously presencing via total exertion (conventionally expressed as dependent origination or conditionality), empty and luminous. It is not some self-existing metaphysical presence, Absolute or Being, nor is spontaneous presencing a formless entity - whatever arises is spontaneous presencing, always seen, heard, tasted and experienced. What that is not seen, not heard and not experienced, is merely our conceptual idea of what “Presence” is. Neither is spontaneous presencing an inherently existing universe, nor is spontaneous presence manifesting causelessly/randomly/by chance, rather that spontaneous presencing is none other than the Maha (great/boundless) total exertion of the seamless conditions of the three times and ten directions, however it is not a linear causality where cause and effect are strictly separate with an actor (cause) and acted-upon (effect). As Dogen said, “Cause is not before and effect is not after.” and John Tan wrote in 2013, “Do you feel being caused or effected? It is just a single flow. Now when we see one, the 10000 things arise”. You can say what I experience (there is no ‘I’) is a spontaneous presencing that is none other than a seamlessly interdependent, radiant and empty universe.” - Soh, 2019

Also, this article by Daniel M. Ingram is a good read with good advice: My Experiment in Actualism-Influenced Practice, by Daniel M. Ingram, September 20th, 2013

“[9:22 AM, 10/6/2019] John Tan: Post anatta, there is a phase where experience can turn very "physical", that is why I told you de-construct "physicality". There isn't background yet there are clearly all those external "things" that are solidly and concretely "real". Like "I AMness", the external "things" seem so undeniable.

Therefore at this phase, anatta is limited to no self, no background, only aggregates and one can experience a concretely external world in constant interaction with aggregates forming into the 18 dhatus.

Then when we engage into the teaching of emptiness, "physicality" gets deconstructed, phenomena too are realised to be empty. So what does that mean?

It is not about the cessation of those we conventionally called "things"; not the sudden disappearance of diversities into a whole. Therefore it is not a subsuming either into an integrated wholeness.

Then what is it? How should the view be like to re-integrate this anatta "experience" if we were to do away with the dualistic and substantialist view?

Such integration and re-orientation of "view" with the new found anatta insight and experience are not a one day event or a year or a decade...it is an ongoing continuous refinement as the dualistic and substantialist paradigm runs very deep.

It involves a phase where you are able to deconstruct the meaning and definition of conventional "things" and existence and relook at experience. This is not a "non-conceptual" state where practitioner is unable to differentiate left from right or a lost of diversities or even subsuming into a one whole oneness.

It is a phase post anatta and one begin to taste the six entries and exits in a new deconstructed way without subsuming and with diversities intact, without background. Neither this, nor that; neither internal nor external; neither caused nor uncaused, neither exist nor not exist... beyond extremes... that is where practitioner begin to genuinely appreciate the view of DO and Emptiness into the anatta experience and the phases of experiential insights. That is the beginning of the integration of view, experience and realization.

Most confusions arise because we are too used to analysing things in isolation and separation. Either we exclude awareness when analysing thing or we subsume everything into one, that is the karmic tendency of essence view... once we realize this habit and see the flaw of it, the mind will be willing to drop such paradigm and become open. If the world is seen and experienced from a perspective that is never divorce from awareness and there is no background and conventional things are de-constructed, look into your experience right now and tell me, what is it like when you experience conventional existence.

[12:59 PM, 10/6/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Like reflections.. dynamic and functioning but unfindable and without essence. Also when I say leg is aching I dont think true existence of leg and aching is located somewhere inside the leg. It's just dependently originating sensations conventionally called leg pain that's all.. vivid but empty

[1:02 PM, 10/6/2019] John Tan: We were trained to think and analyse otherwise. Therefore heart sutra says 远离一切颠倒梦想。

[1:03 PM, 10/6/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. yea

[1:03 PM, 10/6/2019] John Tan: Yes correct. Therefore this dynamic functioning without essence without dimension unfindable is expressed in the view of DO [dependent origination] and emptiness. Totally exerted but nothing real. Like water reflections.”

“[7:55 PM, 11/17/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Actually I still find actual freedom best describes my experience compared to many teachings with the exception that everything is empty clarity unfindable like reflections of total exertion lol

[8:02 PM, 11/17/2019] John Tan: Yes AF is quite good

[8:03 PM, 11/17/2019] John Tan: In experience. However I do not see insights of penetrating conventional reality.

[8:16 PM, 11/17/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah I was about to say.. the way they express seems lacking in [certain] insight to me”

John Tan always seem to be one step ahead of me in describing my experience -- when I told him about my intense PCE-like state, he described my bodily energies without me telling him, and he knew I would not be able to contain the energies and will experience energy imbalances (See chapter: **Tips on Energy Imbalances**). He also described my next step - the permanent experience of total exertion (AF Richard’s ‘infinitude’) which became my natural state in the following month.

John Tan wrote on 24 March 2019 to me,

“Not going back. If you want to write a guide, write with sincerity. If you write with a sincere heart, I am sure people will benefit as those are genuine insights leading to effortlessness of instant presence. However, never claim or even suggest the phases of insight are end of journey, that is very naive, untrue and misleading.

As for powerful vivid radiance, they are normal if you have spent quality time post your anatta insight. When the center is gone, externally you will feel like a ball of radiance appearing as the world. Internally, energetic radiance will beam through your body cells, vibrating on your crown, your face, dancing as pulsation of your flowing blood, that is the time you should seriously look into energy practice. If you are not interested in energy practice, just learn deep rhythmic abdominal breathing until a state of no mind into deep release, it will help to contain and regulate and the powerful energetic radiance.

As for AF, the immolation of Self/self is simply the deconstruction of mental construct of self as a center background. Richard has carried it far enough to reach total exertion which he called "realizing one's destiny" if I remember correctly. However the same cause reifying the background is now manifesting in the foreground as the "actual world",

therefore there is no thorough liberation. Imo from the perspective of self immolation, he has carried it further than you and his essays can definitely help to guide you. It does seems final in a pseudo sense.

For you, it will be difficult to find a teacher but if you humble yourself, everyone, every event is your teacher. When I tell you to differentiate experience from realization and established firmly on the view as your guide, the purpose is not for you to go around stereotyping people, it is strictly for your own development.

Lastly due to the Awakening to Reality group and your relentless advertisement, I have been receiving messages. I do not want to mislead people and I am not a spiritual teacher and I do not wish to develop it into a cultic group 🤣. As for me, practice is ongoing and there is no finality. So I will continue my never ending journey. You can WhatsApp me just don't message me who is at what stage... lol.”

After writing to me, in the following months my total exertion deepened and stabilized. I experienced the 'destiny' of infinite space and time that Richard always talked about, which became a natural state.

"Boundless Cosmic Activity vs Focused Anatta Radiance

[9:40 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Now I’m walking.. absolutely no self /Self/agency at all.. and the pce [i.e. the vivid radiance of anatta that 'makes' everything like a wondrous paradise is now my unbroken state] is still there as before but the main characteristic that stands out now is not the radiance but the walking is just infinitude of the universe as the seamless activity.. in the absence of an agent/self/Self there is just this

[9:42 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: [And also the experience comes with a] Very still mind.. except when writing this

[9:42 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Yes don't focus, relax and be light. No self, no center. Don't over do. Learn a somatic technique.

[9:52 PM, 3/29/2019] Soh Wei Yu: yea this cosmic sense of centerless ness is different from focused kind of pce.. it’s like pce is already natural here and makes no sense to focus more.. the cosmic sense of Maha does not require focusing but complete opening without self/Self/agent... it created no tension in my head at all

[9:55 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Yes

[9:57 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: Just centerless and without background, light and immense. No focus no concentration. Natural and free.

[9:57 PM, 3/29/2019] John Tan: And master a somatic technique to release your body and any form of energy imbalance.

.....

It is good you are seeing the fabrications working together to shape a dualistic experience. That is seeing the afflictive dependent origination, seeing that selfing-activity, duality, grasping as the very activity that dependently originates. Therefore there is no self/Self/agent, but there is the afflictive sense of self, grasping and reification in action. There is no actor but there is action, be it afflictive or non-afflictive.. it is not an agent giving rise to afflictive activities but afflictive activities giving rise to selfing through dependent arising

As for total exertion and maha, that is more on the non-afflictive side of dependent origination, the general principle of dependent origination. You will see that the +A expressions are all over in Dogen's writings, whereas the Mahamudra/Tibetan tends to emphasize more on -A.

I started having mini glimpses of total exertion as early as 2011 but only had very clear experiences of it beginning in 2013 where I wrote about dharma body - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2013/09/dharma-body_7.html -- where even the walking activity is as immense and boundless as the whole universe, a seamless activity of mind-body-universe.

John Tan used the word Maha and Total Exertion to describe this, it is about totality. Maha means great, but it is not big vs small, but great without boundaries. Immense as the universe. As he often said, be light as feather but immense as the universe.

Nowadays the infinitude of maha total exertion has become a natural, effortless state as an ongoing experience. When you are doubtless and stabilized anatta, you must mature your insight and experience in this direction.

That Maha total exertion must become a natural state, as written in https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html -

"A week ago, the clear experience of Maha dawned and became quite effortless and at the same time there is a direct realization that it is also a natural state. In Sunyata, Maha is natural and must be fully factored into the path of experiencing whatever arises. Nevertheless Maha as a ground state requires the maturing of non-dual experience; we cannot feel entirely as the interconnectedness of everything coming spontaneously into being as this moment of vivid manifestation with a divided mind.

The universe is this arising thought.

The universe is this arising sound.

Just this magnificent arising!

Is Tao.

Homage to all arising.""

- **Disease of Non-Conceptuality:**

(This disease can occur even in previous stages)

The Disease of Non-Conceptuality

I was looking back at some posts by Thusness and found one that really summarizes the problems of many people (including me, once, and many others I see in forums)...

Thusness:

(31 October 2010)

Hi Geis,

I 'fear' commenting about other's forum because AEN will create havoc in that forum after that...lol.

Jokes aside but I think it is still too early to say that insight of anatta has arisen. There seem to be a mixing up and a lack of clarity of the following experiences that resulted from contemplating on the topic of no-self:

1. Resting in non-conceptuality
2. Resting as an ultimate Subject or
3. Resting as mere flow of phenomenality

In case 1 practitioners see ‘The seen is neither subjective nor objective.... it just IS....’
In terms of experience, practitioners will feel Universe, Life. However this is not anatta but rather the result of stripping off (deconstructing) identity and personality.

When this mode of non-conceptual perception is taken to be ultimate, the terms “What is”, “Isness”, “Thusness” are often taken to mean simply resting in non-conceptuality and not adding to or subtracting anything from the ‘raw manifestation’. There is a side effect to such an experience. Although in non-conceptuality, non-dual is most vivid and clear, practitioners may wrongly conclude that ‘concepts’ are the problem because the presence of ‘concepts’ divides and prevent the non-dual experience. This seems logical and reasonable only to a mind that is deeply root in a subject/object dichotomy. Very quickly ‘non-conceptuality’ becomes an object of practice. The process of objectification is the result of the tendency in action perpetually repeating itself taking different forms like an endless loop. This can continue to the extent that a practitioner can even ‘fear’ to establish concepts without knowing it. They are immobilized by trying to prevent the formation of views and concepts. When we see ‘suffering just IS’, we must be very careful not to fall into the ‘disease’ of non-conceptuality.

In Case 2 it is usual that practitioners will continue to personify, reify and extrapolate a metaphysical essence in a very

subtle way, almost unknowingly. This is because despite the non-dual realization, understanding is still orientated from a view that is based on subject-object dichotomy. As such it is hard to detect this tendency and practitioners continue their journey of building their understanding of ‘No-Self based on Self’.

For Case 3 practitioners, they are in a better position to appreciate the doctrine of anatta. When insight of Anatta arises, all experiences become implicitly non-dual. But the insight is not simply about seeing through separateness; it is about the thorough ending of reification so that there is an instant recognition that the ‘agent’ is extra, in actual experience it does not exist. It is an immediate realization that experiential reality has always been so and the existence of a center, a base, a ground, a source has always been assumed. This is different from 'deconstructing of identity and personality' which is related to non-conceptuality but 'actual' seeing of the non-existence of agent in transient phenomena.

Here practitioners will not only feel universe as in case 1 but there is also an immediate experience of our birth right freedom because the agent is gone. It is important to notice that practitioners here do not mistake freedom as ‘no right or wrong and remaining in a state of primordial purity’ ; they are not immobilized by non-conceptuality but is able to clearly see the ‘arising and passing’ of phenomena as liberating as there is no permanent agent there to ‘hinder’ the seeing. That is, practitioner not only realize ‘what experience is’ but also begin to understand the ‘nature’ of experience.

To mature case 3 realization, even direct experience of the absence of an agent will prove insufficient; there must also be a total new paradigm shift in terms of view; we must free ourselves from being bonded to the idea, the need, the urge and the tendency of analyzing, seeing and understanding our moment to moment of experiential reality from a source, an essence, a center, a location, an agent or a controller and rest entirely on anatta and Dependent Origination.

In my opinion, the blog that hosts the articles on “Who am I” and “Quietening the Inner Chatter” provide more in depth insights on non-duality, Anatta and Emptiness. The author demonstrates very deep clarity of ‘what experience is’ and the ‘nature (impermanent, empty and dependent originates according to supporting conditions)’ of experience.

Just my 2 cents. :-)
Labels: Anatta, Non Dual |
- John Tan, 2010, The Disease of Non-Conceptuality

Also related:
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../the-trap-of-non...
The Trap of Non-Conceptuality
Also see: The Disease of Non-Conceptuality

For me, the idea that conceptuality is a trap is actually a trap itself that depletes the potential of spiritual practice. It entails throwing away a very valid dimension of experience - after all, thinking is part of reality as well. And since it is

thinking that creates the illusion of duality, it is at the level of thought that illusions must be dismantled. At the level of "reality" there is nothing to be done.
"Observe and see" [which is the only instruction you say you follow,] is also doing something. A spiritual path without instructions is not a path. And from the moment there are instructions, all of them may be valid, depending on the practitioner.

The neo-Advaita has this characteristic of tending to be nihilistic in relation to the path and means of liberation. "There is no one, there is nothing that needs to be done." This reveals a profound misunderstanding concerning the nature of experience: Everything happens in experience, even without an agent to perform it - the spiritual path is no exception.

The simplicity of "not thinking" is a comfortable nest that prevents us from asking important and bothersome questions. There is "presence" in the act of observation, but that presence has to be investigated in order to make its nature known. Otherwise, we are substituting a belief - in the self - for another - in some immutable and eternal presence. Both ego and presence are obvious and undeniable for those who establish them.

Buddhism also dissolves all concepts, but only when they have already done their job of deconstructing all concepts. "Silencing" conceptuality too soon is to throw away the ladder (of analytical thinking) before we've used it to go beyond the wall (of conceptual ignorance).
– Andre A. Pais

“Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
John Tan and I are "against" "don't know mind". In fact usually it refers to a state of marigpa (ignorance) called the indeterminancy of alaya. (see next post)
[14/5/18, 9:56:36 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Anyway she asked dae Kwang who let’s go
[14/5/18, 9:57:07 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Dae Kwang said precisely, he ask her back I think she said don’t know then he say correct, even Buddha’s don’t know, this don’t know is Buddha nature
[14/5/18, 9:57:22 AM] John Tan: Nonsense
[14/5/18, 9:57:42 AM] Soh Wei Yu: What nonsense?
[14/5/18, 9:58:01 AM] John Tan: Such half past six answers is not zen
[14/5/18, 9:58:08 AM] John Tan: Degraded
[14/5/18, 9:58:22 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oh but also he say
[14/5/18, 9:58:29 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Heart Sutra no eyes no nose no... etc
[14/5/18, 9:58:35 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Then he ask what is no eyes
[14/5/18, 9:58:48 AM] Soh Wei Yu: He ask someone he doesn’t know
[14/5/18, 9:58:53 AM] Soh Wei Yu: He say wall is white
[14/5/18, 9:59:46 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Seung sahn always emphasise don’t know

[14/5/18, 9:59:50 AM] Soh Wei Yu: I think it’s just non conceptuality
[14/5/18, 9:59:55 AM] Soh Wei Yu: I mean the don’t know part
[14/5/18, 9:59:57 AM] John Tan: I know
[14/5/18, 10:00:29 AM] John Tan: This is a disease rather than wisdom
[14/5/18, 10:01:44 AM] John Tan: What "don't know" points to is "non-conceptual" functioning.
[14/5/18, 10:03:30 AM] John Tan: Lack of investigation and stable insights we will not be able to distinguish stable insights of non-conceptual functioning from "conceptual releasing".
[14/5/18, 10:04:20 AM] John Tan: Originally I wanted to tell tan jui Hong but dun want to talk too much.
[14/5/18, 10:05:11 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[14/5/18, 10:05:35 AM] Soh Wei Yu: I think you shld tell jui.. anyway jui has realised anatta I think might be into total exertion but not sure
[14/5/18, 10:06:15 AM] John Tan: Next time
[14/5/18, 10:06:21 AM] John Tan: Is he Singaporean
[14/5/18, 10:09:06 AM] John Tan: Freeing from reified constructs is a whole new world of practice. That is "don't know mind" starts from there.
[14/5/18, 10:14:26 AM] Soh Wei Yu: You mean jui?
[14/5/18, 10:14:31 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Ya jui is singaporean, you met before
[14/5/18, 10:14:37 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[14/5/18, 10:14:37 AM] John Tan: Yes
[14/5/18, 10:14:40 AM] John Tan: Ic
[14/5/18, 10:23:21 AM] John Tan: Also understanding reified constructs and experiencing reified constructs in oneself is the most crucial aspect.
[14/5/18, 10:24:31 AM] John Tan: That is the first part of an anatta is key to understanding grasping.
[14/5/18, 10:25:25 AM] John Tan: Only when we understand constructs and reification, can we understand grasping.
[14/5/18, 10:27:23 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[14/5/18, 10:27:49 AM] John Tan: So understanding mental constructs are very imp
[14/5/18, 10:28:11 AM] John Tan: That includes the energy and mind-body reactions
[14/5/18, 10:32:53 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[14/5/18, 10:46:32 AM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted
[14/5/18, 10:46:43 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Overemphasize non conceptual I think
[14/5/18, 10:48:17 AM] John Tan: That is lack of insight and investigation
[14/5/18, 10:49:16 AM] John Tan: Means due to lack of working with conceptual mind, the "reasons" and the "way" isn't appropriately expressed
[14/5/18, 10:49:33 AM] John Tan: There is the beauty of mathematics
[14/5/18, 10:49:59 AM] John Tan: Like calculus to understand complex movement and rate of change
[14/5/18, 10:51:03 AM] John Tan: There is glendin that can express total exertion and anatta properly.
[14/5/18, 10:51:52 AM] John Tan: There are energies, prana, awareness teachings of functionality not due to "conceptualities"

[14/5/18, 10:54:06 AM] John Tan: What just "don't know mind". By doing that, he has caused confusion in himself and others due to lack of investigation. The way of non-conceptual function is not to be solved by mind.
[14/5/18, 11:13:12 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. not to be solved by the mind but by what way?
[14/5/18, 11:15:23 AM] John Tan: By the "don't know mind" they are talking
[14/5/18, 11:15:37 AM] John Tan: The problem is they do not know
[14/5/18, 11:15:39 AM] John Tan: Lol
· Reply · 8w · Edited”

“[19/1/17, 8:26:44 AM] John Tan: Many sees Zen Buddhism as awareness teaching and in fact many Teachers do present it that way.
[19/1/17, 8:27:28 AM] John Tan: Over Promoting non-conceptuality and mistaken it as intuitive wisdom.
[19/1/17, 8:28:20 AM] John Tan: Intuitive wisdom is direct and non-conceptual but it is not about non-conceptuality.”

“Dry non-conceptualities means PCE without insight and wisdom. Without insight of how the conceptual mind affect experiences and wisdom of the nature of mind and phenomena.

There is the experiences, the view and the realization. So practice is not just about experiences, one must realise clearly what the view anatta and emptiness is pointing to in real-time experiences. Essentially it is about understanding how reification from conceptualities confuse the mind leading to dualistic and inherent thoughts and the freedom from them into spontaneous perfection of natural condition.” – John Tan to Mr F, 2020

“[15/2/18, 12:26:59 PM] Soh Wei Yu: The way Zen master S describes here sounds like agent also lol
[15/2/18, 12:27:22 PM] John Tan: Most of Zen masters will
[15/2/18, 12:27:39 PM] John Tan: As they focus on experience of anatta rather than view
[15/2/18, 12:27:55 PM] John Tan: You need both to have prajna wisdom
[15/2/18, 12:28:36 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[15/2/18, 12:28:40 PM] John Tan: Knowing that “agent” is a learnt concept. There is nothing so “ultimate" about it.
[15/2/18, 12:29:13 PM] John Tan: Experience is anatta but insight and view is different
[15/2/18, 12:31:08 PM] John Tan: From insight one gradually understands the "logic" of the impossibilities of inherent existence led to non-arisen and emptiness realization”

“Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
On how "Don't Know Mind" is actually a state of ma-rigpa (or at most the coarse form of unripened rigpa), Mipham Rinpoche puts it nicely:
http://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/mipham/mipham-lamp

quote: "In this, there is not any of the clear insight of vipaśyanā, which discerns things precisely, and so the masters call it marigpa (“non-recognition, ignorance, unknowing”). Since you cannot define it and say “In this, there is none of the clear insight of *vipaśyanā,* which discerns things precisely, and so the masters call it ignorance. Since you cannot define it and say “This is what it’s like” or “This is it!” such a state is called indeterminate. And since you cannot say what kind of state you are resting in, or what your mind is thinking, it is also called common equanimity. In fact, you are stuck in an ordinary state within the ground-of-all (*ālaya*).”

Contra rigpa (knowledge): " Although there is no dualistic separation here between an experience and an experiencer, still the mind is certain about its own true nature, and there is a sense that, “There is nothing whatsoever beyond this.” When this occurs, because you cannot conceptualize it or express it in words, it is acceptable to apply such terms as *free from all extremes, beyond description, the fundamental state of clear light* and *the pure awareness of rigpa*.

As the wisdom of recognizing your own true nature dawns, it clears away the blinding darkness of confusion, and, just as you can see clearly the inside of your home once the sun has risen, you gain confident certainty in the true nature of your mind.

This is the instruction for cracking open the eggshell of ignorance.”

“[19/1/20, 10:11:40 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Robert saltzman

[19/1/20, 10:11:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Hale oh sent me
[19/1/20, 10:11:46 PM] Soh Wei Yu: What do you think
[19/1/20, 10:59:50 PM] John Tan: I think it is very well articulated. However that is only into the first step and taste of anatta.

After this initial anatta insight and no-mind experience, practitioners must also understand how the language that breaks experiences into subject/action/object paradigm creates confusions about:

1. The idea of coming, going, arising, ceasing in relation entity and characteristics. If there is no entities, what do all these mean?

2. What is meant by "physical"? We are so used to and being so deeply hypnotized into seeing a world that is "objective"...and if we deconstruct the "objective and physical world", does it means pure subjectivity?

So what is DO? To mee, we cannot really understand DO and emptiness without deeply looking into questions...
[20/1/20, 8:54:55 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[20/1/20, 8:54:58 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Hale oh sent me more
[20/1/20, 8:55:05 AM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted
[20/1/20, 8:55:06 AM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted

[20/1/20, 8:55:06 AM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted
[20/1/20, 9:17:25 AM] Soh Wei Yu: What do you think
[20/1/20, 9:17:54 AM] John Tan: No time to read yet
[20/1/20, 9:24:02 AM] John Tan: Quite ok.
[20/1/20, 9:31:31 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Hale oh say he addresses the points you mentioned
[20/1/20, 9:37:28 AM] John Tan: This message was deleted.
[20/1/20, 9:37:53 AM] John Tan: Missed video call
[20/1/20, 9:43:04 AM] John Tan: Not exactly what I m looking for. This "aliveness", "vibrancy", without essence and self understood from essenceless-ness view...when we say materialism or oneness, pure subjectivity or objectivity, that is essence view. If it is not negating both ends with Neti Neti but by DO, then what does it mean and how does it relates to the nature of experience?
[20/1/20, 9:49:48 AM] John Tan: When the mind stop subscribing from essence view, how is one to orientate oneself and "knowing" is replace by what? Not knowing? Don't have to know? Knowing by way of "what"?
[20/1/20, 10:05:34 AM] John Tan: There is a big difference between "not knowing" and "cannot be classified as such".
[20/1/20, 10:34:22 AM] John Tan: What does the four logical arguments of the middle way do try to achieve? A state of not knowing?
[21/1/20, 12:51:09 PM] Soh Wei Yu: No.. recognition of the nature of phenomena/appearance as free from extremes like reflections”

“First is no one behind, just fully and completely that “Color” -- the place where there is no heat or cold. Just this as this, not this becoming that. No remainder, no trace, non-conceptuality.

Second is although that “Color” is fully clear, vivid and amazing “real”, it is nothing substantial – Empty! -- This seeing involves concepts.

First is no one behind -- no feeler, just fully and completely that “Sensation”. No ownership, no center, no doership, non-dual.

Next examine the entire whole of sensations. The intensity and clarity of hardness, coldness, solidness...etc... The entire sense of “hereness” is just an impression. An impression of dependently originated formation, nothing inherently “here” nothing substantial – Empty! -- This seeing involves concepts.

Let conceptuality and non-conceptuality work as one.

There are those that only emphasized on experience alone with no clear discernment. A sincere practitioner should not fall into the disease of it.

Practice is not just about the immediate appreciation of the no seer, just the scenery. That would be just an experience of no-mind. When asked, who ‘sees’, the practitioner may say no one sees but deep in him, it is the void boundless clarity

that sees. This certainly does not help and over emphasizing on the appreciation of mere experience will not go very far. This “trace” must be overcome with earnest sincerity.

If a practitioner can clearly see that “who sees” is a wrong question and rephrase it to what conditions give rise to this activity seeing, then that “trace” will be overcome completely in time to come. For refining the view itself is the practice and the process of overcoming the “trace” completely.” - John Tan, 2012

"Not even being non-conceptuality can stop such tendencies because it is not just about freedom from concepts."

"...But to me, as I started from a direct experience of presence, I do not see the need to put an end to conceptuality by way of MMK... That is MMK imo is much more than putting an end to conceptuality. It will be quite a clumsy technique if the sole purpose is to reach that as a goal. Zen koan, the two stanzas, vipassana bare attention, self enquiry are all more efficient and effective ways to achieve that goal. In fact after I got familiar why these techniques, I have my own koan and techniques to trigger people into non-conceptual experiences...lol"

"The process of eradicating avidyā (ignorance) is conceived... not as a mere stopping of thought, but as the active realization of the opposite of what ignorance misconceives. Avidyā is not a mere absence of knowledge, but a specific misconception, and it must be removed by realization of its opposite. In this vein, Tsongkhapa says that one cannot get rid of the misconception of 'inherent existence' merely by stopping conceptuality any more than one can get rid of the idea that there is a demon in a darkened cave merely by trying not to think about it. Just as one must hold a lamp and see that there is no demon there, so the illumination of wisdom is needed to clear away the darkness of ignorance." - Napper, Elizabeth, 2003, p. 103"

"Without concepts, experience is naturally present and luminous is not exactly true imo.

We can stop conceptualization or even have many episodes of sustained non-conceptual non-dual or no mind experiences, still intellectual obscurations of seeing entities, entity possessing characteristics, cause and effect, agent and movement... etc continue to haunt us. Non-analytical cessation is temporary.

So the freedom from conceptualization cannot simply be a stopping of "conceptualization", a clear insight that sees through the emptiness of conventional constructs must arise.

Although the insight results in non-conceptuality, it also recognizes the cause of obstructedness is ignorance that obscures and blinds, not designations and constructs.

When contemplating DO (though conceptual), not only does the sense of self not arise, it replaces self view. Non-conceptual resting is too a means to an end. The end is not a non-conceptual luminous state but the complete uprooting of ignorance.

Therefore when Dogen rolls the boat in total exertion, there are concepts, designations and conventions but there is no sense of self, no sense of boundaries, no sense of obstructedness between the sky, the boat, the oar and the sea...all inter-penetrate beyond their conventional boundaries into the act of rolling." – John Tan, 2020

"The tendency to be nonconceptual is very ingrained not just after anatta, but even after I AM. It is a non conceptual and non-dual realization and taste of luminosity that is wonderful and blissful, but not necessarily liberating. But what happens after I AM? One always try to remain non conceptual, thoughtless, samadhi in pure beingness... while the views of duality and inherency of an ultimate Self, Source, Substratum remains uninvestigated and unchallenged. Insight into non dual and anatta does not arise until one actively engages in investigating one's views and concepts and penetrate further into the nature of reality.

Likewise, even after anatta, by getting stuck with PCE one does not investigate into dependent origination and emptiness, then all the uninvestigated views of inherency still remain in full force but are either unrecognised or taken as true (like AF) or merely suppressed in a nonconceptual state.

I used to think why the need to engage in conceptual conditionality etc.. prefer to rest in anatta non-conceptuality. Nowadays I know total exertion is triggered by contemplating on the conceptual conditional relations.. but its not an issue to me. More important is seeing dependent origination and then into total exertion and emptiness. Then one is liberated be it conceptual or non-conceptual. It's more important to experience release and taste of total exertion and emptiness be it in conceptual and nonconceptual.. rather than getting confused in conceptual and then seeking refuge in nonconceptual.

However, I believe total exertion can also remain a mere nonconceptual experience, in the sense of mere infinitude, taste of maha... this is the AF sort of total exertion but this fails to see the dependencies involved... and because one doesn't see dependencies one ends up in a very solid physical view of universe, everything is local, existing inherently in specific space time as objects and properties." - Soh, 2020

“To me, the idea that conceptuality is a trap is actually a trap itself that impoverishes the potential of spiritual practice. It's throwing away a very valid dimension of experience - after all, thought is part of the real one too. And since it is thought that creates the illusion of duality, it is at the level of thought that illusions should be dismantled. At the " real " level nothing is to be done.

" Watch and watch " [which is the only instruction you say follow,] is also doing something. A spiritual path without instructions is not a path. And from the moment there are instructions, all may be valid depending on the practitioner.

Neo-Avaita has this characteristic of tendering to be nihilistic about the path and means of release. " There is no one, there is nothing that needs to be done." This reveals a profound incomprehension of the nature of experience: Everything happens in experience, even without agent that does it - the spiritual path is no exception.

The simplicity of " not-thinking " is a comfortable nest that keeps us from asking important and disturbing questions. There is " presence " in observation, but that presence must be investigated in order to understand its nature.

Otherwise we are raising a belief - the me - for another - the unchanging and eternal presence. Both ego and presence are obvious and undeniable to those who defend them.

Buddhism also dissolves all concepts, but only when these have made their work deconstructing all concepts. " Shutting up " conceptuality too soon is throwing off the ladder (of analytical thinking) before we used it to move beyond the wall (conceptual ignorance).” – Andre A. Pais

- Nihilism:

(This disease can occur even in previous stages)

Thinking there’s no-self, therefore no need for practice, etc.

"No-self/Anatta is not about denying thinking, action, carrying water and chopping wood... and this is the key difference between genuine anatta insight from dualistic conceptual understanding. The very notion that "action" and "intention" implies, or necessitates, an "actor", and therefore for non-action the intentions and actions must also cease, is precisely using dualistic thinking to understanding anatta" - Soh, 2013

"People that have gone into the nihilistic understanding of 'non-doing' ended up in a mess. You see that those having right understanding of 'non-doing' are free, yet you see discipline, focus and peace in them. Like just sitting and walking... ...in whatever they endeavor. Fully anatta." - John Tan, 2018

Mind-Body Drop

Mind-Body Drop arises as a result of deconstructing the construct of a ‘body’. For some, this may arise even at the One Mind phase in John Tan/Thusness Stage 4 realization (e.g. Rupert Spira wrote about mind-body drop even in the One Mind phase in *Transparency of Things*), for others (such as Soh) as a further progression after John Tan/Thusness Stage 5 realization. If you have realised anatta but have not yet undergone a distinct phase of mind-body drop, investigating the body-mind construct according to this chapter might help. I (Soh) remember having a realization and penetration of the body construct - that it is merely a construct extrapolated out of a bunch of disjointed bodily sensations, and thus the ‘body’ along with its shape, contour and boundaries never truly existed as the entity that was conceived, one week after my realization of anatta through Bahiya Sutta that led to mind-body drop. My experience of anatta was deepened and further purified as a result.
“I was investigating the sense of a body about a week after anatta realisation, then it was just seen that just like anatta realization, in hearing just sound and in seeing just seen, what we call “body” really cannot be found as an entity beside the various disjoint sensations.. the whole construct of an inherent body along with the sense of a boundary, shape, size, weight is thus penetrated via insight into its delusory nature.

This is different from people who only had a glimpse of mind body drop.. just like anatta realization is a realization of what always is, it is not just a peak experience of no mind. I think you should know the difference” – Soh

Gary wrote in Dharma Overground in 2009, "In walking meditation the "I" appears to place or make sense of the sensory perception. This involves a body image for example foot sensations are perceived to be at the foot, movement is perceived in relation to the previous position. Once in walking meditation I had the body disappear so there was just the feet touch sensations belonging and going nowhere. Does this describe direct without intermediary?”

John Tan replied, "Yes Gary, what you said is correct. It is only a matter of depth and intensity, ie, how clear, how vivid, how real, how pristine the arising and passing sensations are when compared to the “I AM”. In the case of “I AM”, it is so clear, so real and so pristine that it burns away all traces of doubts. Absolutely certain, still and thoughtless that even Buddha is unable to shake the practitioner from this direct Realization of “I-ness”.

By the way, there should not be any ‘image’ in whatever experienced, thus, direct.

With regards to the “body's disappearance” that you mentioned, it relates to an experience called the “mind-body drop”. There are few more important points that you may want to take note:

1. It is not just due to “concentration on the sensations, the body image had no opportunity to arise”, the insight that mind and body are mere constructs must also arise and the disappearance is also the result of dissolving of these constructs.
2. Mind-body drop must also come with a sense of lightness. In the first few glimpses, you will also feel weightless and when the experience becomes clearer, you will also realize the “weight” of these constructs.

3. From the constructs, you may also want to explore further what happen when the constructs of “in/out” disappears.

Lastly the practice of self enquiry is not without danger. A practitioner can also be led into a state of utter confusions when exploring the ‘I’ through mere analytical process. So practice with care.”

Do note however that the dissolution of the sense of body can also occur as a peak experience in deep meditation or samadhi. This is not the same as the mind-body drop that occurs as a result of penetrative wisdom and insights that deconstructs all artificial and constructed boundaries, shapes, and solidity of a body and mind. The mind-body drop of wisdom can be a 24/7 experience, whereas dissolution of body-sense from a peak experience or a state of samadhi is short-lived and temporary.

“Mind and body dropped off; dropped off mind and body! This state should be experienced by everyone; it is like piling fruit into a basket without a bottom, like pouring water into a bowl with a pierced hole; however much you may pile or pour you cannot fill it up. When this is realized the pail bottom is broken through. But while there is still a trace of conceptualism which makes you say ‘I have this understanding’ or ‘I have that realization’, you are still playing with unrealities.” - Dogen

"Wu wei ding (the samadhi of non-action) is not about sitting and the state of body disappears completely. :) The 24/7 without sitting and the body disappears completely is the transparency I told you. It is realisation of non-duality. Stability until a certain stage, one will have that sort of feeling. I have explained that to you before. The truth of wu-wei ding (the samadhi of non-action) is a form of natural ding that you do not have to meditate at all as all is spontaneous arising accompanied by crystal clarity. It is what I have told you yesterday. In this state of wu wei ding (the samadhi of non-action), it is not about practice through sitting until you reached such a stage, it is rather a very deep form of realisation and the non-dual realisation has sunk deep into the inmost consciousness that the 3 characteristics I told you is experienced. Transparent Crystal clarity is that state of body disappears completely 24/7. But you need the other 2 characteristics I told you (fearlessness and non-attachment), you will have a crystal clarity free of any idea or sense of 'self'. What she said is true so far. But the 2 characteristics must be present to experience about wu wei ding (the samadhi of non-action). It cannot be compromised. In between the chan ding and wu wei ding (the samadhi of non-action), requires the experience of non-dual. Otherwise there is no way to enter such a stage." - John Tan, 2007

“It is true that when no-self is actualized and when the body is deconstructed, a practitioner naturally experiences the mind-body drop. This means any sense or image of a body and a mind completely dissolves along with any senses of 'entrapment' or 'boundaries' at all. But do note that this is not a stage of meditative achievement. It is the result of wisdom-insight into the delusional constructions that conceives of a substantial body and a mind. In other words it is a form of self-view and view of a physical body being dissolved via prajna wisdom. Our notion of a solid body with fixed shape, boundaries, and substance deconstructs when we examine it and see that there is only flickering sensations without a center or boundary. After which, mind-body drop becomes natural and effortless, not a stage to be attained in meditation and lost outside meditation.

And because this is so, *mind body drop is an experience in daily life*. It is not separated from your mind, body, and daily life. It does not mean your body and mind ceases - it is your deluded image of an inherently existing self, body and mind is being released, so your daily life is experienced in a liberated manner.

Therefore it is erroneous to think of "mind-body drop" as a stage of achievement separated from this very experience of body-mind-world. It is only that this body-mind-world is seen as empty of anything graspable, transparent, and boundless. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form.

More importantly, by that stage, you realize that "Awareness" itself is an imputation on the entire flow of manifestation - "Awareness" itself does not exist separately apart from each momentary mind moment, whether it is a sense of formless presence in deep sleep, or the shapes and forms of each waking moment. In other words, Awareness is also empty of being an independent, separate self.

Since this is the case, it is seen at this stage that the very notion of "true absolute Awareness" vs "phenomena" is a false, dualistic paradigm in the first place. There is only the one suchness of form and essence - in so far as each experience, each form, is both luminous clarity (Awareness) in essence and empty of self in nature. This is the nature of mind.” - Soh, 2013

“Like when backdropped self is seen through, mind-body dropped came later. Also “hereness” and “nowness” aren’t deconstructed at the time of “no self”.

Similarly lately about the relationships between “body”, “consciousness” and “vayu” *(Soh: Tibetan word for ‘wind’, in Dzogchen wind and mind are seen as synonymous)* aren’t too. The seeming relationships of “cause and effect” among them seems real, intimate until one realises that the diversities of vayu are just one’s mind and mind is empty, then the “relationship” disappears, the gap between them disappears.

So like the above case, after a few decades, one can still be so attached and affected unknowingly until certain 缘 (conditions) that allows one to see through” - John Tan, 2018

“Before inquiring into a new way of listening, let me just share the joy of walking through the fields and woods on this extraordinary land. Just stepping out of the reception area, closing the door behind me, walking away from the overhang that shields one from the sun and rain, there isn’t any enclosure left—not even a body!

All I am is the birds singing and fluttering, bare branches swaying in the breeze, the ground partly frozen yet melting, the pond covered with a thin layer of ice, and the blue hills, sky and wandering clouds within close reach. There is also a throbbing heart and the people walking on the path. Even those who are not here—aren’t we all together this one moment—beholding everything out of stillness?” - Toni Packer, The Wonder of Presence

“Your movement of thought interferes with the process of touch, just as it does with the other senses. Anything you touch is always translated as 'hard', 'soft', 'warm', 'cold', 'wet', 'dry', and so on.

You do not realize it, but it is your thinking that creates your own body. Without this thought process there is no body consciousness -- which is to say there is no body at all. My body exists for other people; it does not exist for me; there are only isolated points of contact, impulses of touch which are not tied together by thought. So the body is not different from the objects around it; it is a set of sensations like any others. Your body does not belong to you.

Perhaps I can give you the 'feel' of this. I sleep four hours at night, no matter what time I go to bed. Then I lie in bed until morning fully awake. I don't know what is lying there in the bed; I don't know whether I'm lying on my left side or my right side -- for hours and hours I lie like this. If there is any noise outside -- a bird or something -- it just echoes in me. I listen to the "flub-dub-flub-dub" of my heart and don't know what it is. There is no body between the two sheets -- the form of the body is not there. If the question is asked, "What is in there?" there is only an awareness of the points of contact, where the body is in contact with the bed and the sheets, and where it is in contact with itself, at the crossing of the legs, for example. There are only the sensations of touch from these points of contact, and the rest of the body is not there. There is some kind of heaviness, probably the gravitational pull, something very vague. There is nothing inside which links up these things. Even if the eyes are open and looking at the whole body, there are still only the points of contact, and they have no connection with what I am looking at. If I want to try to link up these points of contact into

the shape of my own body, probably I will succeed, but by the time it is completed the body is back in the same situation of different points of contact. The linkage cannot stay. It is the same sort of thing when I'm sitting or standing. There is no body.

Can you tell me how mango juice tastes? I can't. You also cannot; but you try to relive the memory of mango juice now -- you create for yourself some kind of an experience of how it tastes -- which I cannot do. I must have mango juice on my tongue -- seeing or smelling it is not enough -- in order to be able to bring that past knowledge into operation and to say "Yes, this is what mango juice tastes like." This does not mean that personal preferences and 'tastes' change. In a market my hand automatically reaches out for the same items that I have liked all my life. But because I cannot conjure up a mental experience, there can be no craving for foods which are not there.

Smell plays a greater part in your daily life than does taste. The olfactory organs are constantly open to odors. But if you do not interfere with the sense of smell, what is there is only an irritation in the nose. It makes no difference whether you are smelling cow dung or an expensive French perfume -- you rub the nose and move on.” - U.G. Krishnamurti, The Mystique of Enlightenment

“Hi Star,

You have loosen the ‘bond’ of a background, no-self is experienced; but the propensity of ‘attempting to understand through seeing things as object and subject’ is still there. “What it means, what it is, how do we make sense of it’ is a struggle. It is a struggle of the dualistic mind attempting to understand something from measurement and comparisons. This propensity must also be deconstructed until you are so comfortable of being naked in awareness. This mode of gaining knowledge from deduction, induction, measurement and comparison is ‘learnt’, it is not the natural state of awareness. There must be a clear understanding that the depth of spirituality cannot be known through such mode of ‘understanding’. This is also a 'seed' that creates the ‘sense of self’. A unit of experience is ‘blocked’ by all these propensities that we are unable to intuitively know the unborn nature of awareness. It is not a 'mind trick' as what some said although wisdom practitioners do not talk about non-local issues.

Conventionally, to experience non-local aspect of pristine awareness is through concentration. It is the job of concentration. Concentration till one enters into a deep stage of absorption and object-subject becomes one, a state of transcendence. Non-local experiences in such a practice are reached through the power of ‘focus’. So the key towards non-local experiences is absorption and transcendence.

Non-duality on the other hand is a form of realization, a realization that all along there never was a split. Its clarity and level of transcendence come from dissolving the ‘seeds’ that prevents the ‘seeing’. Very seldom we hear people talk about the non-local aspect in the practice of wisdom but non-duality do meet non-locality at the point of transcendence (phase 4). It is some sort of absorption as in the case of concentration but it is more of 'clarity till the point of absorption'. It may sound paradoxical, but this is true. This is the way of wisdom.

There are many layers of consciousness and the truth of non-duality must first sink deep down into the inmost consciousness. It is important to reach the phase of ‘turning point’ as at this phase, the realization of no-self has sunk sufficiently deep into consciousnesses till there is no retreat. Otherwise that joy and experience of no-self will be lost in a few months time (This is my experience) and resurface again until "Emptiness as forms' is deeply experienced. In phase 2-3, non-local experiences may be experienced for some people and mostly with the help of concentration (like asking a question of our past lives) it can be experienced after 6-9 months of practices especially after deeply experiencing ‘Emptiness is Form’. Non-local aspect is triggered at the point of transcendence.

Below is some sort of summary of what I think an insight practitioner will go through. What I outline is far from being authoritative, it is just for communicating and sharing purposes. :)

1. Perception still lingers but there is a clear understanding that there is no-self apart from manifestation. Practice clarity from insight meditation will help. Clarity from all 6 doors – eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, consciousness.

2. Perception is dropped. Mind/body dropped. A very important phase. ‘Body’ is but a ‘mental construct’. When that ‘imprints’ and ‘meanings’ of ‘body’ is dropped, division between inner and outer is gone. All divisions of senses are also gone. All is One Taste. Just Isness. Manifold of presence experienced clearly.

3. Emptiness as Forms and Spontaneous manifestation.
Submerge oneself into spontaneous manifestation yet there is crystal clarity of the texture and fabric of awareness as ‘forms’. Dualistic cognition is replaced by directness, naturalness and spontaneity. Spontaneity, naturalness and flow took over all dualistic perceptions. Conscious, sub-consciousness and unconsciousness function as a whole without division. There is no need to hold on to a conscious knowing; there is no need to understanding anything. Whether one understands is no more important, all knowingness comes from flow of wholeness. There is no attempt to deviate from what is as a whole. Here, there is a danger of skewing towards spontaneity. Not to miss out the luminosity aspect, Emptiness as Forms. These 2 aspects must is one. Luminosity is conscious level and spontaneity is unconscious level, the 2 as one. :) True spontaneity is in luminosity. Psychological death is overcome. Turning point.

4. Only one tremendous spontaneous clarity flows, there is no differentiation between what that spins the earth or what that pumps your heart beats or what that makes the plants grow. When you eat an apple, it is the entire universe that eats the apple. Just one whole clarity spontaneity flow. Continual experience of transcendence joy and bliss.

How the 'seeds' bond us is amazing... Ultimately nothing gained! :)

Good Luck!” - John Tan, 2007

“Now the idea that there is a bordering line between an internal aspect of the body and an external aspect apart from the body has to be taken into account as well. This 'bordering line' creating the dichotomy of internal/external is based on identification with 'the body'. But the body itself is not separate from vision either, there are other colors and shades

which are identified as 'my body' but just like the colors which composed the salt, these colors appearing as a 'body' do not communicate a possessive nature. The colors simply arise no different than any other color in the field of vision. We only impute a notion of 'my body' over these colors. There are other faculties that seem to correlate with vision to give the appearance of a homogeneous cluster of sensations conventionally called the body and we can discuss those separately, but all are merely qualities appearing to awareness as awareness itself. So the notion of an 'subject inside' viewing an 'object outside' is not self-evident in vision. Vision simply appears and is completely non-discriminative. Another thing which isn't self-evident in vision is the presence of 'eyes' doing the seeing, we never experience or see our own eyes at any time, even in the act of looking at a mirror we only are ever seeing colors and shapes arise that we identify with as 'me' and 'my eyes' but the eyes appear nowhere within vision itself, we again only accept a story about this.” - Kyle Dixon, 2012, in a must-read article A Sun That Never Sets

“Bringing awareness to present moment sensory experiencing, to the *actuality* of the body, erases the body and the self completely, meaning that it erases the mirage of separate and enduring *things* and the imaginary boundaries between them, and it leaves only this seamless and all-inclusive boundlessness. Of course, we still have a functional sense of boundaries and of our body--that doesn't vanish into some formless mush. But on close investigation, we find that the boundaries and the forms don't really exist in the way we think they do.

The real body (no body at all) is not a cadaver or an anatomy book picture. It is alive and fluid and moving. Experientially, it is nothing but ever-changing sensations showing up in this vast awaring presence that includes the whole universe. And in fact, "the body" is an ever-moving process of blood circulating, cells dividing, nerves firing, heart beating, lungs expanding and contracting, food being taken in, broken down, disbursed or eliminated. The body is in constant exchange with the environment. The skin is porous and breathing, flaking off, regenerating. The breath is coming in and going out. Your body now is not the same body you had ten years ago, or ten days ago, or even back when you started reading this paragraph less than a minute ago. *Everything* has changed since then -- your hormones, your neurochemistry -- the whole universe has moved. Life is nothing but ceaseless change.” - Joan Tollifson, “Body / No-Body” https://www.joantollifson.com/writing7.html

In 2010, Thusness wrote:

“(10:54 PM) Thusness:when joan tollifson say there is "no body, only sensations", she understands clearly the power of the 'word' body. How it 'blinds' the mind. she does not mean that 'body' does not exist conventionally. Similarly, when a practitioner speaks of non-dual, he penetrates and seen through the illusion of 'division'. this is different from just mere non-dual experience. but both are of different experiences and realization -- "division" and "no body". sames applies to "coming and going" . it does not mean that once you experienced non-dual, you will penetrate the meaning of "no coming or going"
(11:00 PM) AEN: rupert spira said "The idea that there is a mind which contains memories, hopes, fears and desires is itself simply a thought that appears from time to time like any other thought, in Consciousness. There is no mind as such. The existence of a mind is simply an idea, a concept. It is a useful concept but it is not a fact of experience. Likewise, we do not experience the body in the way we normally conceive it. In fact there is no body as such. There is a series of

sensations and perceptions appearing in Consciousness. And from time to time, there is a thought or an image of a 'body,' which is considered to be the sum total of all these sensations and perceptions. However, this thought or image appears in Consciousness in exactly the same way as the sensations and perceptions to which it apparently refers. And this apparent body is made of the same substance as a thought. It is made of mind, taking mind in the broadest sense of the term, to include sensing and perceiving as well as thinking. If we stick closely to the actual experience of our bodily sensations, shapeless and contourless. We may experience a visual perception of the skin and from several different perceptions conceive a well-defined border which contains all other bodily sensations. However, this conception does not describe the Reality of our experience. The visual perception of the surface of the body is one perception. A bodily sensation is another perception. When one of these perceptions is present the other is not. If they are both present, they are one perception, one experience. One perception cannot appear within another. All perceptions appear within Consciousness. We do not experience a sensation inside the body. What we call the body is in fact the experience of a sensation. We do not experience a sensation within a well defined contour of skin. We experience a sensation within Consciousness and we experience a visual perception within consciousness. We can explore this further by imagining what it would be like to draw our actual experience of the body at any given moment, on a piece of paper. Would it look anything like the body we normally conceive? Would it not be a collection of minute, amorphous abstract marks, floating on the page, without a shape or a border? Is not the actual experience of the body a collection of minute, amorphous, tingling sensations free-floating in the space of Consciousness? And if we look at these sensations, are they not permeated and saturated with the presence of Consciousness in which they appear? The continuity and coherence that we normally ascribe to the body in fact belong to Consciousness. In fact our true body is Consciousness. It is Consciousness that houses all sensations that we normally refer to as the body. Our true body is open, transparent, weightless and limitless. It is inherently empty and yet contains all things within itself. That is why such an empty body is also inherently loving. It is the welcoming embrace of all things."

(11:05 PM) Thusness: a person that experiences this also experiences mind/body drop. however, that is One Mind.
(11:06 PM) AEN: icic..
(11:06 PM) Thusness: only when you get to there, then we discuss further.
(11:07 PM) Thusness: i wrote that in one of dharma dan forum too.
about awareness and sensations
(11:07 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:07 PM) Thusness: hmm...which one
to gary?
(11:07 PM) AEN: hmm.. cant remember
but familiar
(11:08 PM) AEN: to gozen?
(11:08 PM) AEN: oh ya
to gary
https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Fdharmaoverground.wetpaint.com%2Fthread%2F2657969%2FThe%2Bmind%2Band%2Bthe%2Bwatcher&data=04%7C01%7C%7Cac0176105b07438c720208d93abc4679%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637605402576305987%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=brSQWCeZr%2FvY4f6kZlZfKYtKahy4fkl5zLDeVE11l9U%3D&reserved=0
(11:09 PM) Thusness: not in our blog?

cannot get in...forgot the password
(11:10 PM) AEN: Gary: | Post edited: Apr 6 2009, 9:10 AM EDT

"In walking meditation the "I" appears to place or make sense of the sensory perception. This involves a body image for example foot sensations are perceived to be at the foot, movement is perceived in relation to the previous position. Once in walking meditation I had the body disappear so there was just the feet touch sensations belonging and going nowhere. Does this describe direct without intermediary?
"

Yes Gary, what you said is correct. It is only a matter of depth and intensity, ie, how clear, how vivid, how real, how pristine the arising and passing sensations are when compared to the “I AM”. In the case of “I AM”, it is so clear, so real and so pristine that it burns away all traces of doubts. Absolutely certain, still and thoughtless that even Buddha is unable to shake the practitioner from this direct Realization of “I-ness”.

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1. It is not just due to “concentration on the sensations, the body image had no opportunity to arise”, the insight that mind and body are mere constructs must also arise and the disappearance is also the result of dissolving of these constructs.
2. Mind-body drop must also come with a sense of lightness. In the first few glimpses, you will also feel weightless and when the experience becomes clearer, you will also realize the “weight” of these constructs.

3. From the constructs, you may also want to explore further what happen when the constructs of “in/out” disappears.

Lastly the practice of self enquiry is not without danger. A practitioner can also be led into a state of utter confusions when exploring the ‘I’ through mere analytical process. So practice with care.
(11:11 PM) Thusness: not just that
another one about awareness and sensations
(11:12 PM) Thusness: but what rupert said is exactly what i want to convey to gary
(11:12 PM) AEN: oic.. in the post on awareness and sensations?
(11:13 PM) AEN: or the post above
(11:15 PM) Thusness: i said if we truly and directly experience sensations as it is, then we will realize sensations share similar nature as awareness, they share the same taste
(11:17 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:24 PM) Thusness: If we ask “Who am I”, does the question already condition the experience from beginning? If we look for a 'who' and enters into the realm of pure, it naturally becomes a pure subject. Is the subject that important in the realm of pure? Similarly when we say 'here and now', has the mind already pre-assumed the existence of space and time?
(11:25 PM) Thusness: If for a moment we are able to free ourselves from of all sort of definitions and labellings, feel the bare sensations without words, feel 'aliveness', feel 'existence' then search with our entire being its 'location'. Have the same sort of 'awakeness' for 'location' as we have for “I AM”. Is impermanence a movement from here to there?
(11:25 PM) Thusness: If we penetrate deeply, it will reveal that there is nothing here, nothing now, nothing self, yet, there is vivid appearance. There is only always vivid appearance which is the very living presence that dependently

originates whenever condition is. And what that dependently originates does not arise, does not cease, does not come, does not go.
(11:26 PM) Thusness:
We may then have an intuitive glimpse that direct path and vipassana are intimately related. :)
(11:28 PM) AEN: oic.. so transience can only be Presence, it is not a time and space thing
(11:30 PM) Thusness: just now i told about 'body', 'dual', coming and going'
do you know what that means?
(11:33 PM) AEN: u mean this: *it does not mean that once you experienced non-dual, you will penetrate the meaning of "no coming or going"
(11:33 PM) Thusness: yes
(11:34 PM) Thusness: but there is another important thing but you pasted me the rupert passage
(11:34 PM) Thusness: so what is seeing dual, body, coming and going mean?
(11:36 PM) AEN: imposing an inherent and dualistic framework on experience so it seems theres division and entities?
(11:36 PM) Thusness: yes
that is seeing things inherently
(11:37 PM) Thusness: so a practitioner goes through one by one and later from the insight of emptiness realizes it is all about seeing things inherently
(11:38 PM) Thusness: then the practitioner progress further
(11:38 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:40 PM) Thusness: u must know what is meant by 'inherent' experientially
(11:40 PM) Thusness: it is referring to the 'blinding factor' as in the case of the 'body', 'dual'
(11:41 PM) Thusness: then a practitioner resolve all these into the One Mind, One Awareness, One Consciousness
(11:42 PM) Thusness: this too must be dissolved. :)
(11:42 PM) AEN: icic..
(11:44 PM) AEN: btw
do you see awareness as always present? :P
(11:44 PM) Thusness: i see it that way but not as what you think
(11:44 PM) AEN: oic
(11:45 PM) Thusness: u see awareness and manifestation as separate
(11:45 PM) Thusness: u see caused and uncaused as separate
(11:45 PM) AEN: icic..
(11:46 PM) Thusness: my understanding of uncaused is from causes and conditions
my understanding of awareness is from manifestation
(11:46 PM) Thusness: but it is difficult to explain to u
(11:47 PM) Thusness: at present you only understand what i meant i see awareness from manifestation
from the insight of anatta
(11:47 PM) AEN: oic
ya i dun really understand uncaused is from causes and conditions
(11:48 PM) Thusness: think there is a passage in non-duality by david loy
(11:48 PM) AEN: sentience cannot be resulted from insentient conditions right
oic
oh the one i sent you b4?
(11:48 PM) Thusness: think so

(11:48 PM) AEN: icic
(11:50 PM) AEN: david loy in "nonduality": the hierarchy that causality constructs must collapse into an interpenetration in which each event is equally conditioned by the whole and manifests that whole as the only thing in the universe.
"...we find ourselves in a universe of sunya-events, none of which can be said to occur for the sake of any other. Each nondual event -- every leaf-flutter, wandering thought, and piece of litter -- is whole and complete in itself, because although conditioned by everything else in the universe and thus a manifestation of it, for precisely that reason it is not subordinated to anything else but becomes an unconditioned end-in-itself..."
(11:54 PM) Thusness: and you must experience what's said directly as this moment of vivid living presence.
(11:54 PM) AEN: oic..
(12:00 AM) Thusness: think through and summarize, don't cut and paste”

Anatta as Dispersing into Multiplicity + Spontaneous, Disjoint and Unsupported

Anatta stanza two leads to dispersing of Presence into/as multiplicity, while Anatta stanza one leads to spontaneous, disjointed and unsupported nature of arising. This leads to dissolving even the grounding into ‘Here/Now’, which will be an issue if one focuses solely on the second stanza of anatta (like many Actual Freedom and Zen teachings that I’ve seen which keeps emphasizing on being grounded in Here/Now).

On the dispersing of Presence as multiplicity:

“In many of your recent posts after the sudden realization of anatta from contemplating on Bahiya Sutta, you are still very much focused on the vivid non-dual presence. Now the everything feels ‘Me’ sort of sensation becomes a daily matter and the bliss of losing oneself completely into scenery, sound, taste is wonderful. This is different from everything collapsing into a “Single Oneness” sort of experience but a disperse out into the multiplicity of whatever arises. Everything feels closer than ‘me’ due to gaplessness. This is a natural [state after anatta]” - John Tan, 2011

“It looks your Bahiya Sutta experience helped you see awareness in a different way, more .... empty. You had a background in a view that saw awareness as more inherent or essential or substantive?

I had an experience like this too. I was reading a sloka in Nagarjuna's treatise about the "prior entity," and I had been meditating on "emptiness is form" intensely for a year. These two threads came together in a big flash. In a flash, I grokked the emptiness of awareness as per Madhyamika. This realization is quite different from the Advaitic oneness-style realization. It carries one out to the "ten-thousand things" in a wonderful, light and free and kaleidoscopic, playful insubstantial clarity and immediacy. No veils, no holding back. No substance or essence anywhere, but love and directness and intimacy everywhere...” - Greg Goode, Greg Goode on Advaita/Madhyamika (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2014/08/greg-goode-on-advaitamadhyamika_9.html)

“Although Bhāviveka doesn’t struggle that much, he is quite clear:

“Since [the tīrthika position of] self, permanence, all pervasiveness and oneness contradict their opposite, [the Buddhist position of] no-self, impermanence, non-pervasiveness and multiplicity, they are completely different.” – Kyle Dixon, 2020

“Bhāviveka demonstrates the proper way to view buddhanature:

The statement "The tathāgata pervades" means wisdom pervades all objects of knowledge, but it does not mean abiding in everything like Viśnu. Further, "Tathāgatagarbhin" means emptiness, signlessness and absence of aspiration exist the continuums of all sentient beings, but is not an inner personal agent pervading everyone.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

"Therefore to see that all dusts are primordially pure from before beginning is the whole purpose of maturing the insight of anatta. The following text succinctly expresses this insight:

...According to Dogen, this “oceanic-body” does not contain the myriad forms, nor is it made up of myriad forms – it is the myriad forms themselves. The same instruction is provided at the beginning of Shobogenzo, Gabyo (pictured rice-cakes) where, he asserts that, “as all Buddhas are enlightenment” (sho, or honsho), so too, “all dharmas are enlightenment” which he says does not mean they are simply “one” nature or mind.

Anything falling short of this realization cannot be said to be Buddhist's enlightenment and it is also what your Taiwanese teacher Chen wanted you to be clear when he spoke of the "equality of dharma" as having an initial glimpse of anatta will not result in practitioners seeing that phenomena are themselves primordially pure." - John Tan, 2011, Realization, Experience and Right View and my comments on "A" is "not-A", "not A" is "A"

“All Buddhas and all things cannot be reduced to a static entity or principle symbolized as one mind, one nature, or the like. This guards against views that devaluate the unique, irreplaceable individuality of a single dharma.” - Hee-Jin Kim, Flowers of Emptiness, p.257

“Gensha Shibi once said, “The whole universe throughout all its ten directions is the One Bright Pearl.” You need to clearly recognize the converse, which is that the One Bright Pearl is the whole universe throughout all its ten directions.”
- Zen Master Dogen, https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo/058jippo.pdf

Mahamudra has a similar teaching as Dogen on 'multiplicity':

"The medium One Taste is when this tarnish has dissolved: the conviction of savoring and clinging to multiplicity as being one taste. You have actualized the resplendent indivisibility of perceptions and mind in which the perceived is not held as being outside and mind is not held as being inside.

The greater One Taste is when you realize multiplicity as being of one taste and you experience one taste as being multiplicity. Thus, everything subsides into the original state of equality."

"You have perfected the strength of One Taste if whatever you encounter is experienced as the expression of this original state of equality. You have not perfected its strength if one taste isn't experienced as multiplicity because of retaining the bind of a remedy." - Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, Clarifying the Natural State

John Tan and Soh very much likes and resonates with the teachings of Mahamudra and Soto Zen (Dogen’s lineage) very much as they are about the full-blown actualization of anatta, with different emphasis on emptiness (Soto Zen emphasizing +A, Mahamudra emphasizing the -A in general). If you resonate with the teachings, Soh highly recommends finding a good teacher, guru or sangha to get acquainted with/receive teachings from the lineage and participate in communal practice.

On “multiplicity”, post-anatta when one penetrates into emptiness, there is no one or many:

“[13/3/16, 2:15:15 PM] John Tan: When the "one" dissolves, so too must the "many". How is it that the "one" or "many" can dissolve? Because both are unreal and purely conventional. If either are real, then changing and dissolving will be impossible.”

Although I might also add, eventually presence as a unifying field from which all arise is also seen through.

Something Soh wrote before:

“"Awareness when reified becomes a whole containing everything as its parts, like the ocean and its waves. But when you deconstruct the wave and ocean, the whole and parts, it is just the radiance and clarity of pellucidity of sound, taste, colors of the imputed notion of wave and ocean. Ocean and waves, whole and parts, are mere dependent designations, merely conventional without any self-essence/inherent existence. Awareness is a name just like weather is a name denoting rain, wind, sunshine, etc., and not a container or singular substance pervading them or transforming or modulating as them. Likewise, awareness is not an eternal singular substance pervading or containing or even modulating as everything. What is seen, heard, sensed are clear and vivid, pellucid and crystal, and 'awareness' is just a name denoting just that, not a diverse manifestation pervaded by a single ontological awareness that is non-dual with everything. Eventually, awareness is seen through as having its own reality and forgotten into the pellucidity of appearance, not just a state but an insight. As a spiritual teacher once said, 'If you see that awareness is none other than everything, and that none of those things are separate "things" at all, why even use the word awareness anymore? All you are left with is the world, your life, the diversity of experience itself.' Another teacher, Dr. Greg Goode, told me, 'It looks like your Bahiya Sutta experience helped you see awareness in a different way, more... empty. You had a background in a view that saw awareness as more inherent or essential or substantive?'

I had an experience like this too. I was reading a sloka in Nagarjuna's treatise about the 'prior entity,' and I had been meditating on 'emptiness is form' intensely for a year. These two threads came together in a big flash. In a flash, I grokked the emptiness of awareness as per Madhyamika. This realization is quite different from the Advaitic oneness-style realization. It carries one out to the 'ten-thousand things' in a wonderful, light and free and kaleidoscopic, playful

insubstantial clarity and immediacy. No veils, no holding back. No substance or essence anywhere, but love and directness and intimacy everywhere..."”

[1/8/23, 12:06:48 PM] John Tan: It is difficult for a mind holding essential view to understand conceptually seamlessness, free of divisions, boundaries and non-difference.

The best it can do within the limitation of its inherent framework is to describe the taste is like everything emerges from space or emptiness.

So as a skillful means, there is nothing wrong taking things dissolve into an all encompassing dharmadhatu much like how vajrayana visualize everything as deities.

But like how ocean is realized as a construct as well as wave, ocean is not any special than wave. Then when background consciousness is gone and only empty appearances left, even "wave" is gone.

Many got stuck at One-Mind, there are also many that got stuck in non-conceptualities also in de-construction and do know know the actual taste of empty radiance.
[1/8/23, 12:08:49 PM] John Tan: Everything is of "nature" of space in contrast to everything dissolves into space and space becomes a special substratum.

Also,

Ted Biringer commenting on Zen Master Dogen: “...According to Dogen, this “oceanic-body” does not contain the myriad forms, nor is it made up of myriad forms – it is the myriad forms themselves. The same instruction is provided at the beginning of Shobogenzo, Gabyo (pictured rice-cakes) where, he asserts that, “as all Buddhas are enlightenment” (sho, or honsho), so too, “all dharmas are enlightenment” which he says does not mean they are simply “one” nature or mind.”
...
“In Dogen’s view, the only reality is reality that is actually experienced as particular things at specific times. There is no “tile nature” apart from actual “tile forms,” there is no “essential Baso” apart from actual instances of “Baso experience.” When Baso sits in zazen, “zazen” becomes zazen, and “Baso” becomes Baso. Real instances of Baso sitting in zazen is real instances of Baso and real instances of zazen – when Baso eats rice, Baso is really Baso and eating rice is really eating rice.”
- Ted Biringer, https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2017/11/zazen-polishing-tile-to-make-mirror.html

....

Quotes from The Great Ocean Samadhi chapter from Zen Master Dogen's Shobogenzo:

The Buddha once said in verse:

Merely of various elements is this body of Mine composed.
The time of its arising is merely an arising of elements;
The time of its vanishing is merely a vanishing of elements.
As these elements arise, I do not speak of the arising of an ‘I’,
And as these elements vanish, I do not speak of the vanishing of an ‘I’.
Previous instants and succeeding instants are not a series of instants that depend on each other;
Previous elements and succeeding elements are not a series of elements that stand against each other.
To give all of this a name, I call it ‘the meditative state that bears the seal of the Ocean’.

....

The Master’s saying, “One that contains all that exists,” expresses what the Ocean is. The point he is making is not that there is some single thing that contains all that exists, but rather that It is all contained things. And he is not saying that the Great Ocean is what contains all existing things, but rather that what is expressing ‘all contained things’ is simply the Great Ocean. Though we do not know what It is, It is everything that exists for the moment. Even coming face-to-face with a Buddha or an Ancestor is a mistaken perception of ‘everything that exists for the moment’. At the moment of ‘being contained’, although it may involve a mountain, it is not just our ‘standing atop a soaring mountain peak’, and although it may involve water, it is not just our ‘plunging down to the floor of the Ocean’s abyss’.18 Our acts of acceptance will be like this, as will our acts of letting go. What we call the Ocean of our Buddha Nature and what we call the Ocean of Vairochana* are simply synonymous with ‘all that exists’.

-- Full text: https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo/030kaiinZammai.pdf

On the spontaneous, disjoint and unsupported nature of arising aspect of anatta:

“This experience is radically different from One Mind that is non-dual. It is not about stillness transparency and vividness of presence but a deep sense of freedom that comes from directly experiencing manifestation as being disjoint, spontaneous, free, unbounded and unsupported. Re-read the first stanza – an excerpt:

1. The lack of doer-ship that links and co-ordinates experiences. Without the 'I' that links, phenomena (thoughts, sound, feelings and so on and so forth) appear bubble-like, floating and manifesting freely, spontaneously and boundlessly. With the absence of the doer-ship also comes a deep sense of freedom and transparency. Ironical as it may sound but it's true experientially. We will not have the right understanding when we hold too tightly 'inherent' view. It is amazing how 'inherent' view prevents us from seeing freedom as no-doership, interdependence and interconnectedness, luminosity and non-dual presence.” - John Tan, 2011

“In the beginning... when I had the sudden realization by contemplating on Bahiya Sutta, there was a very clear realization of 'in the seeing just the seen' - the second stanza of Anatta in John's article... seeing, hearing, is simply the

scenery, the sound, it is so clear, vivid, without dualistic separation (of subject and object, perceived and perceived)... there never was, there is only the music playing and revealing itself. The scenery revealing itself...

It is very blissful, the luminosity is very clear and intensely felt. Yet it became a sort of object of attachment... somehow, even though luminosity is no longer seen as a Self or observer, there is still a sense of solidity that luminosity/presence is constantly Here and Now. A subtle tendency to sink back into substantialist non-dualism is still present.

Later on, I came to realize that luminosity, presence itself, is ungraspable without solidity. Much like the first stanza of Anatta in John’ article. There is no luminosity inherently existing as the 'here and now'... presence cannot be found, located, grasped! There is nothing solid here. There is no 'here and now' - as Diamond Sutra says, past mind is ungraspable, present mind is ungraspable, future mind is ungraspable. What there is, is unsupported, disjoint thoughts and phenomena... There is only the ungraspable experiencing of everything, which is bubble like. Everything just pops in and out. It's like a stream... cannot be grasped or pinned down... like a dream, yet totally vivid. Cannot be located as here or there.

Prior to this insight, there isn't the insight into phenomena as being 'scattered' without a linking basis (well there already was but it needs refinement)... the moment you say there is a Mind, an Awareness, a Presence that is constant throughout all experiences, that pervades and arise as all appearances, you have failed to see the 'no-linking', 'disjointed', 'unsupported' nature of manifestation.

The luminosity and the emptiness are inseparable. They are both essential aspects of our experiential reality and must be seen in its seamlessness and unity. Realizing this, there is just disjoint thoughts and phenomena arising without support and liberating of their own accord. There is nothing solid acting as the basis of these experiences and linking them... there is just spontaneous and unsupported manifestations and self liberating experiences. Simpo_ described it well recently:

Will like to add that, in my experience, no-self is a more subtle insight than non-duality.

Usually, we see a continuity of mental formation... well... my experience is that it is not always so. The streams of thought seems to be linear but it is not.. To my experience, it is the fast movement of thoughts that give the impression of continuity of self.

Now... thoughts can appear and disappear and they do not have to be linear... 'Simpo' the name pop up and disappear... another image appears and disappears... all of them are not self... just appearance, sensations, etc... and we cannot say they arise from a base or sink into the base. There is no base (as far as I see it)... just this ungraspable appearing and disappearing.

Without this realization, one can never hope to understand this phrase in Diamond Sutra:

Therefore then, Subhuti, the Bodhisattva, the great being, should produce an unsupported thought, i.e. a thought which is nowhere supported, a thought unsupported by sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or mind-objects.

应无所住而生其心

This is the phrase that got 6th Ch'an Patriarch Hui-Neng his great enlightenment after the 5th Patriarch explained it to him.” - Soh, 2011

“...Just as Zen Master Dogen puts it: firewood does not turn into ashes, firewood abides in the phenomenal expression of firewood while ash abides in the phenomenal expression of ash, while at the same time ash contains firewood, firewood contains ash (all is the manifestation of the interdependent universe as if the entire universe is coming together to give rise to this experience and thus all is contained in one single expression).

The similar principle applies not just to firewood and ash but to everything else: for example you do not say summer turns into autumn and autumn turns into winter - summer is summer, autumn is autumn, distinct and complete in itself yet each instance of existence time contains the past, present and future in it. So the same applies to birth and death - birth does not turn into death as birth is the phenomenal expression of birth and death is the phenomenal expression of death - they are interdependent yet disjoint, unsupported, complete. Accordingly, birth is no-birth and death is no-death... Since each moment is not really a starting point or ending point for a entity - without the illusion and reference of a self-entity - every moment is simply a complete manifestation of itself. And every manifestation does not leave traces: they are disjoint, unsupported and self-releases upon inception. This wasn't Dogen's exact words but I think the gist is there, you should read Dogen's genjokoan which I posted in my blog.” - Soh, 2011, The Unborn Dharma - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/06/the-unborn-dharma.html

“A thought is "Unsupported" because it does not arise in dependence upon anything else, not "caused" by another thought ("mind-objects") and of course not "produced" by a thinker, which the Bodhisattva realizes does, not exist. Such an "unsupported thought", then, is prajña, arising by itself nondually.

Hui Neng's grandson in the Dharma, Ma-tsu, reinforces Hui Neng and the Diamond Sutra: "So with former thoughts, later thoughts, and thoughts in between: the thoughts follow one another without being linked together. Each one is absolutely tranquil". [24] That each such "unsupported thought" is absolutely tranquil is a new point, although probably implied by Hui Neng's term "thoughtlessness". So when one loses sense of self and completely becomes an unsupported thought, there is the Taoist paradox of wei-wu-wei, in which action and passivity are combined: there is the movement of nondual thought, but at the same time there is awareness of that which does not change. That is why such an experience can just as well be described as "thoughtlessness". The later Ch'an master Kuei-shan Ling-yu referred to this as "thoughtless thought": "Through concentration a devotee may gain thoughtless thought. Thereby he is suddenly enlightened and realizes his original nature". [25] "Thoughtless thought" is not a mind empty of any thought: "one thought is thoughtless thought."

An important parallel to this is found in the writings of a modern Advaitin, Ramana Maharshi:

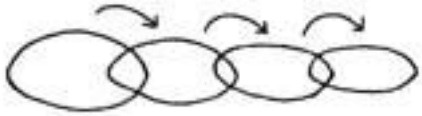
The ego in its purity is experienced in the interval between two states or between two thoughts. The ego is like the worm which leaves one hold only after it catches another. Its true nature is known when it is out of contact with objects or thoughts. You should realize this interval as the abiding, unchangeable Reality, your true Being... [26]

The image of the ego as a worm which leaves one hold only after catching another might well have been used by Hui Neng and Ma-tsu to describe the way in which thoughts are apparently linked up in a series. The difference is that Mahayana Buddhism encourages the arising of "an unsupported thought", whereas Ramana Maharshi understands unchangeable Reality as that which is realized only when it is out of contact with all objects and thoughts. This is consistent with the general relation between Mahayana and Advaita: Nirguṇa Brahman is so emptied of any attribute

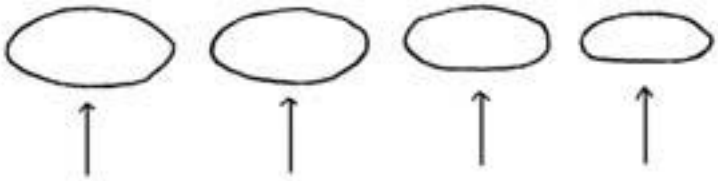
("neti, neti,...") that it becomes impossible to differentiate from Śūnyatā. "It is difficult indeed to distinguish between pure being and pure non-being as a category". (S. Dasgupta). [27] But there is still a difference in emphasis.

Mahāyāna emphasizes realizing the emptiness of all phenomena, whereas Advaita distinguishes between empty Reality and phenomena, with the effect of devaluing the latter into mere māyā.

The image of a worm hesitant to leave its hold was used in a personal conversation I had in 1981 with a Theravada monk from Thailand, a meditation master named Phra Khemananda. This was before I discovered the passage from Ramana Maharshi; what Khemananda said was not prompted by any remark of mine, but was taught to him by his own teacher in Thailand. He began by drawing the following diagram:



Each oval represents a thought, he said; normally, we leave one thought only when we have another one to go to (as the arrows indicate), but to think in this way constitutes ignorance. Instead, we should realize that thinking is actually like this:



Then we will understand the true nature of thoughts: that thoughts do not arise from each other but by themselves.” ~ Zen teacher David Loy, Nondual Thinking

An article on anatta from the monk who drew the diagram can be found here.

Also, some recent writing by Daniel on Vipassana in DhO:

https://www.dharmaoverground.org/discussion/-/message_boards/message/11355316

“*JC said "why the need to experiment with all sorts of practices? Why the need for the switch to Zen, Vajrayana, prayer, Catholic devotional practices, martial arts, magickal practices, and so on?*

Why not just continue to observe exactly what's going on in the present moment and see the Three Characteristics?

Well, it could be enough, sort of. The Three Characteristics are profound, very profound, staggeringly profound, and not easily grasped in their entirety. It seems perfectly reasonable to grasp them in their entirety by observing them, but there is a problem, actually, that last line contains a bunch of problems that are not obvious until you see them clearly.

I will go by the words in that last line to illustrate the problem.

"Continue": there is no continuing. There is nothing to continue, no past that could be continued, no future to continue into, and this moment is entirely ungraspable. No sensation could ever actually grasp or continue. Everything is fresh but perfectly ephemeral. The notion of continuing, from a high insight point of view, is a serious problem. Instead, there has to be a deep non-grasping, a perfect and flawless appreciation of non-continuing, a deep never could be a continuing, a deep nothing could ever be continuing, a deep sense of not only discontinuity, but of the utter flowing, vanishing, empty transience of anything that seemed to be able to continue. One must figure out how to go beyond continuing, beyond grasping, beyond that strange mental illusion that such a thing could ever occur or have occurred.

"Observe": there is no observing. There can be no observing. There is nothing that can observe at all. Everything is just occurring where it is, naturally, straightforwardly. There is no observer. There can't be any observer. There never was any observer. Deeply understanding this is required. There never was any observation. Observation can't finally do it. One must figure out how to shift out of observing to just phenomena occurring.

The qualifier "in the present moment" is a problem in some way. This almost always involves some subtle or gross pattern of sensations that we refer to mentally when we say "now", or "the present", which are not actually stable, not actually a present, not actually anything but more empty transience, yet we make them seem like a stable present. This is very subtle, deep, profound. Even "the present" doesn't withstand scrutiny, and we must be careful with this sticky concept, as it can itself become a sort of a solidified thing, part of the illusion of continuity, observation, practitioner, etc.

So, while it is true that deeply comprehending emptiness, non-continuity, non-observation, and even non-present, can occur by just continuously observing this present moment, we must be careful, and sometimes it takes people shifting out of their trench of "good practice" to do something that is out from good practice and instead is just the unfolding empty wisdom dharma. Various people find various methods to make this subtle shift, and one size definitely does not fit all, so best wishes sorting out what will help you work out your salvation with diligence.

Daniel

One could just say that each transient moment, however it is, naturally understands its ungraspable, discontinuous, ephemeral, non-existent, empty nature, straightforwardly, perfectly.

However, one must be careful not to idealize or intellectually reify any of those concepts and qualifiers, and instead this is something that is purely perceptual.

It applies to every transient moment, regardless of any other consideration of the specific qualities of that moment.

All that said, I did, as my last push, go back to the Three Characteristics and Six Sense Doors, just those, but at a level of extremely high precision, inclusiveness, and acceptance, and found that effective. Yet, the place I had gotten to that seemed to make it effective was a radical disenchantment and dispassion towards with everything “I” had attained,

everything “I” was, everything “I” could become, everything “I” could experience, and how to arrive at such a place varies a lot by the person.” - Daniel M. Ingram

John Tan wrote to me after my deepening insight into the first stanza of anatta that dissolved the grounding into here/now, about 5 months after the initial insight into anatta.

“John: it is insight into anatta and DO then you lose all dualistic and inherent view and what's left is simply dharma... I do not want you to fall back to Awareness. when you do not experience 'disjoint and unsupported' with clarity, you will fall back. when you are able to mature the disjoint and unsupported experience then there is no holding to Awareness... it is just a word. what is actual is just simply this luminous activity or ceaseless activity. so you know what I meant about AF (Actual Freedom) not talking about liberation last time?
it is more on stanza 2. direct apprehension... flesh and blood of this body... all these are trying to get grounded much like in the here and now. though tarin talk about that recently [Soh: letting go of the grounding in Here/Now], I cannot see the clarity of insight. but I do not want you to go around making noise...
you just have to 'taste' this directly and realize whether it is true or not. only when a practitioner mature the 'disjoint' and 'unsupported' realization, the 'grounding' can then be gone. otherwise it is only 'talk'. :P so you must realize it, have a glimpse of this truth, then you know the 'how' of proceeding
how many months already after your insight of anatta?
Soh: about 5” - Conversation with John Tan, 2011

“(6:56 PM) Thusness: now experiencing no-mind as focus attention is different from experiencing no-mind in a disjoint and unsupported manner.
what is the difference?
(6:57 PM) AEN: as focus attention still has some level of effort because there is a need to sustain the ground... no mind in a disjoint and unsupported manner is just constant opening and releasing without effort and without ground
(7:00 PM) Thusness: well said...
so what is the sensation like?
(7:00 PM) AEN: disjoint and unsupported manner is like a sensation of not staying anywhere... ephemeral, bubble like phenomena arising and passing without traces
(7:02 PM) Thusness: the key word is 'freedom'
or liberating” - Conversation with John Tan, 2011

Contemplative Practices to Focus On After Anatta

First give rise to anatta realization, afterwards, let it mature and stabilize in passive mode of no-self, then actualize anatta into the active mode (pure action) and then mature into total exertion. Then also, look into twofold emptiness, and integrate the tastes of +A and -A. That's been my progression. First be thorough and without traces of self/Self or even subtle clinging to an ‘intrinsic clarity/Awareness’.

John Tan wrote to me shortly after my anatta realization (he wrote this in Jan 2011): “AEN,

The summary of the experiences and realizations that you have written for your teachers and masters are good documentations of your journey but not to get too attached to external 'authentication'. :)

What that is more important now is to realize after the arising insight of anatta, how through the adoption of 'right view' lead to thorough seamless and effortless experience of non-dual. As I have told you in the earlier post:

The initial break-through although may appear thorough to you but the clear experience of no-mind should not last more than few months. It will lose its grandeur and the 'split' will surface intermittently.

So go through few cycles of refining your experience of no-mind and continue to adopt the 'right view' of understanding the experience. Have no doubt that Phenomena in their primordial purity is Dharmakaya. Always check whether there is any lingering trace of a background. If there is, there will always be division.

Do not fear challenging your imaginary split. In time to come, you will realize you can't re-experience the 'division' even if you want to.

Once again, check and fearlessly challenge whether such lingering trace remains. Is non-dual intermitent or reversible and has the right view sunk into the deep most of your consciousness. This step must be done with utmost sincerity and must not be compromised.

The grandeur will disappear after a few months but once the right view is practiced correctly, your experience will be stable and continuous. There must be complete thoroughness and effortlessness in non-dual.

This is the only true authentication.”

Stabilizing passive mode of no-self:

10/25/2012 10:33 AM: John: With regards to this innate clarity that is non-dual in nature, is there anything required for you to improve anything?
10/25/2012 10:35 AM: Soh Wei Yu: No
10/25/2012 10:36 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Trying to improve is like adding dirt to improve a jewel, lol
10/25/2012 10:37 AM: John: Precisely, it is just relaxation into clarity...there is truly nothing that needs to be done. That division is gone.
10/25/2012 10:41 AM: John: What will be your natural progression next?
10/25/2012 10:41 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Total exertion?
10/25/2012 10:43 AM: John: No don't talk about that
10/25/2012 10:43 AM: John: Look into your experience now
10/25/2012 10:44 AM: Soh Wei Yu: To fully experience that clarity naturally?

10/25/2012 10:49 AM: John: Yes and you must be very careful about that, to fully experience means? To improve the clarity?
10/25/2012 10:51 AM: Soh Wei Yu: No.. Like you said, simply relax into experience as it is manifesting
10/25/2012 10:56 AM: John: So there are few distinct phases, B4 and after the arising insight of anatta and when that insight of anatta becomes stable with almost no trace and gap left in passive mode of experience in the six entries and exits.
10/25/2012 10:56 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
10/25/2012 10:58 AM: John: Fully relax without holding anything, everything is in clearest expression.
10/25/2012 10:59 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
10/25/2012 11:00 AM: John: And what does that mean?
10/25/2012 11:02 AM: Soh Wei Yu: There is just the happening which is pure clarity, without any effort to abide, improve, etc
10/25/2012 11:06 AM: Soh Wei Yu: When there is no self clinging, there is just the happening/clarity which is self-so, and the intensity of clarity reveals itself due to the absence of obscuration (clinging)
10/25/2012 11:11 AM: John: Yes and what you call clarity is really just "the everything in clearest expression" so forget about the clarity, it is the trick of language.
10/25/2012 11:12 AM: John: So what does it mean by "everything"?
10/25/2012 11:14 AM: John: Means it's no more looking at no-self or clarity but this so called "everything"...
10/25/2012 11:24 AM: John: Btw, just tell James in his language, just be life and as life.
10/25/2012 11:24 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Back
10/25/2012 11:25 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Just post "just be life and as life"?
10/25/2012 11:25 AM: John: In his language,
10/25/2012 11:25 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Everything is like bahiya sutta, the six senses, manifestation, seen, heard, etc
10/25/2012 11:25 AM: John: Coz you are not going to talk about Buddhism
10/25/2012 11:26 AM: John: Yes... You are always talking about these 6 sets of activities
10/25/2012 11:28 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
10/25/2012 11:28 AM: Soh Wei Yu: James anderson seems very much into buddhism tho
10/25/2012 11:29 AM: John: I got to go
10/25/2012 11:29 AM: Soh Wei Yu: Ok.. Cya
10/25/2012 1:19 PM: Soh Wei Yu: How wld you advise thevoice in terms of spiritual practice 😛
10/25/2012 1:19 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Later ill be meeting him
10/26/2012 8:17 AM: John: The latest post needs correction
10/26/2012 8:21 AM: John: There is truly nothing to be done "when" the division is gone
10/26/2012 11:48 PM: John: If you were to do awareness practice, is it easy for you to understand how non-dual in action is like?
10/26/2012 11:51 PM: Soh Wei Yu: No, tendency is to rest in passive awareness
10/26/2012 11:56 PM: John: Just like 2-fold emptiness, extending the emptiness of self to phenomena yet another vehicle is needed to point this out.
10/26/2012 11:59 PM: John: Even a practitioner after maturing his/her non-dual in passive mode may not necessarily see how non-dual in movement is like. He/she can resort to resting in wide open Awareness instead.
10/27/2012 1:22 AM: John: are you afraid of having a view?
10/27/2012 1:23 AM: Soh Wei Yu: No
10/27/2012 1:27 AM: John: you can consider total exertion = non dual-action (total action) + deep sense of interconnectedness

10/27/2012 1:39 AM: John: Tell John Ann, even for this "boundless stillness", the universe has given its very best, therefore no effort and naturally still. 🙂

Then later, mature no-self into the active mode, and then total exertion:

7/9/2012 10:59 PM: John: It will go but will come back again... Your case was a bit unique...lol. But not to the state where there is no heat or cold (Soh: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../where-there-is-no...)...this will be eventually become normal and effortless then you must practice channelling towards specific goal
7/9/2012 11:00 PM: John: Total opening up first for now
7/9/2012 11:00 PM: John: For whatever arises
7/9/2012 11:03 PM: John: Once the taste and the view seamlessly integrate...practice specific concentration ...then slowly understand how consciousness works
7/9/2012 11:04 PM: John: Nowadays does sense of separation still arise?
7/9/2012 11:06 PM: Soh Wei Yu: I see..
7/9/2012 11:08 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Not so much.. But the intensity varies...
7/9/2012 11:10 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Specific concentration like anapanasati?
7/9/2012 11:10 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Should I do it now
7/9/2012 11:10 PM: John: No
7/9/2012 11:11 PM: John: Until sense of self is gone and transcend into the moment of action
7/9/2012 11:12 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Should I close my eyes or open my eyes in meditation?
7/9/2012 11:12 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Think closing eyes is more suitable for anapanasati. But dogen teach open eye meditation
7/9/2012 11:12 PM: Soh Wei Yu: More like zazen
7/9/2012 11:13 PM: John: Now for you is simply doing non dual opening and with the help of view, the entire experience is realized as this arising, this action...until this mature first
7/9/2012 11:13 PM: John: There is no difference
7/9/2012 11:13 PM: Soh Wei Yu: I see
7/9/2012 11:21 PM: Soh Wei Yu: What is channelling to a specific goal?
7/9/2012 11:21 PM: Soh Wei Yu: What goal
7/9/2012 11:21 PM: John: Just practice non dual opening first
7/9/2012 11:21 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic
7/9/2012 11:23 PM: John: For anatta, opening will be realized as action...this manifestation
7/9/2012 11:23 PM: John: But for those that practice non-dual awareness, they always trace back to the source
7/9/2012 11:24 PM: Soh Wei Yu: I see..
7/9/2012 11:26 PM: John: For anatta, there is no source to trace, it is fully manifested as the immediate moment of manifestation or as this flow of action
7/9/2012 11:26 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic..

7/9/2012 11:28 PM: John: Until this view is fully integrated into moment to moment of experience... Then you start practicing concentration
10/24/2012 3:56 PM: John: First understand no-self
10/24/2012 3:57 PM: John: Has total exertion anything to do with innate clarity?
10/24/2012 3:58 PM: Soh Wei Yu: When there is no self, naturally everything is vivid clarity. But there is no inherently existing clarity like an atman
10/24/2012 3:58 PM: John: KOK your head can you answer directly to the point
10/24/2012 3:59 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Total exertion isn't about clarity, but whenever there is no self be it active or passive the clarity aspect of everything shows itself clearly
10/24/2012 4:01 PM: John: What is total exertion about if it is not about this innate clarity?
10/24/2012 4:02 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Full involvement and participation in action, intention, thought, without a self or doer/deed gap, instead only action
10/24/2012 4:02 PM: John: What else?
10/24/2012 4:04 PM: John: What you first understand anatta it is just intensity of luminosity but slowly how has experience become after you begin to look into DO.
10/24/2012 4:06 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Not solid and inherently existing, instead fluid and involving all causes and conditions in creating/manifesting activities
10/24/2012 4:07 PM: John: And later?
10/24/2012 4:09 PM: Soh Wei Yu: I dunno.. Just transcending into the activity of d.o.?
10/24/2012 4:09 PM: Soh Wei Yu: As in total exertion
10/24/2012 4:10 PM: Soh Wei Yu: I feel every moment is an actualizing of all conditions including intentions in one activity, activity is actualized by conditions
10/24/2012 4:12 PM: John: Yes...that clarity is now forgotten...no diff from a Self... Into this interdependent activity
10/24/2012 4:13 PM: Soh Wei Yu: you mean forgetting clarity as some here/now ground
10/24/2012 4:14 PM: Soh Wei Yu: There is no presence in and of itself, no here/now
10/24/2012 4:14 PM: John: No
10/24/2012 4:15 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oh you mean the clarity becomes traceless in activity
10/24/2012 4:16 PM: John: Why presence and here and now?
10/24/2012 4:16 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Its due to substantial view... Prevents fully appreciating total exertion and transience
10/24/2012 4:17 PM: John: are you saying yourself?
10/24/2012 4:17 PM: John: Or you are making a general remark
10/24/2012 4:17 PM: Soh Wei Yu: General remark. But that's also the case for myself in the past
10/24/2012 4:18 PM: John: So what else?
10/24/2012 4:20 PM: John: For you now it is as if that clarity has turned inside out and become traceless into this moment of activity
10/24/2012 4:20 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Yes
10/24/2012 4:21 PM: Soh Wei Yu: That's what you mean by being like a view actualized and forgotten?

10/24/2012 4:24 PM: John: Let's say you are chanting now with your entire body-mind
10/24/2012 4:25 PM: John: Mind-body all drop and become this moment of action in chanting
10/24/2012 4:26 PM: John: Then another one came and start chanting in the same frequency
10/24/2012 4:26 PM: John: Then another one
10/24/2012 4:26 PM: John: Then another one
10/24/2012 4:27 PM: John: Tell me what it is like right now with the mere thought of what I said right now
10/24/2012 4:30 PM: Soh Wei Yu: The whole universe is chanting... I get this sense like one year ago when chanting in dharma center
10/24/2012 4:30 PM: John: ? (thumbs up)
10/24/2012 4:32 PM: John: All consume each other into maha suchness...great and miraculous

10/24/2012 5:57 PM: John: 4 points:
10/24/2012 5:58 PM: John: From Innate clarity to DO
10/24/2012 6:00 PM: John: To one action and what are the diff
10/24/2012 6:01 PM: John: To inter-consume that each node of the net inter-consume and feels the same total exertion
10/24/2012 6:03 PM: John: To this has always been the "Pre-condition" as you quoted..obscure and too occupied by that sense of self and went un-notice.
10/24/2012 6:06 PM: John: Dun also whole universe...lol
10/24/2012 6:07 PM: John: Dun Always
10/24/2012 6:07 PM: John: people read until sian and mean nothing
10/24/2012 6:10 PM: John: Change the post : "also when you start..." Too many emphasis
10/24/2012 6:17 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic
10/24/2012 6:18 PM: John: Means the pt you want to bring out is how the no-self when understood from anatta, do allow you to move passive to active, slowly from mere traceless clarity of the six entries and exits to one action (no doer-deeds gap) to one-activity to total exertion until you understand the implication of Indra-net. "You" must be lost but the full implication of inter-action, inter-be... Must be realized.
10/24/2012 6:19 PM: John: you cannot think or understand intellectually... you have to engage and fully involved.
10/24/2012 6:20 PM: John: When no-self is experienced this way it is completely different from Awareness practice.
10/24/2012 6:23 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
10/24/2012 6:22 PM: John: These are the few turning points.
10/24/2012 6:57 PM: John: Did Wu bong said that?
10/24/2012 6:58 PM: John: How come exactly what I wrote... Lol
10/24/2012 7:05 PM: John: Not one process to total exertion
10/24/2012 7:06 PM: Soh Wei Yu: No he said "Why am I talking about this? Because of this one word, seamless. According to our teaching, our original experience is seamless. That means that name and form is always changing, but one thing remains consistent. Although you can make sandalwood into an incense stick, into a carved elephant, or into a little box, its smell is the same. Also our teaching tells us that we are originally like one big net. That means we are all interconnected, continuously, without any break or separation.
Together is already a pre-existing condition. We are also this wide, interconnected experience. We are all originally pulsating dynamically moment by moment, moment by moment. Together-action is not something we create. Whatever we practice as together-action is just to remind ourselves."
10/24/2012 7:06 PM: Soh Wei Yu: what you mean?

10/24/2012 7:07 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oops
10/24/2012 7:07 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Wrote wrong
10/24/2012 7:12 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Sorry not wu bong, is wu kwang
10/24/2012 7:16 PM: John: And not "understand Indra-net and dependent origination as one action"
10/24/2012 7:17 PM: John: Take out "as one action"
10/24/2012 7:19 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Ok
10/24/2012 7:23 PM: John: You are still unable bring out the essence of how total exertion is like the opening gate that when more and more nodes are added...the inter-consume
10/24/2012 7:24 PM: John: When in passive mode this is also directly experienced and intuit
10/24/2012 7:24 PM: John: But let your experience and understanding settle first
10/24/2012 7:27 PM: John: It is like every node when added exert every single one
10/24/2012 7:29 PM: John: After that you will never feel innate clarity or self or anything but the immensity of this interconnectedness
10/24/2012 7:29 PM: John: Get it
10/24/2012 7:31 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
10/24/2012 7:32 PM: John: Not just in the seen, just the seen...lol

"Total exertion has 2 flavors: the interpermeation and interpenetration of all things and wholeheartedness of action without self/Self.", “Total exertion is not just interpenetration. Maha is an experience of great beyond measure. It is an experience of everything being consumed as it. Only in anatta this experience can be accessed without much issue. So [for] I AM if [one is] without that experience [of I AM] is short of I AM... ...I have told you experientially there is no difference [between I AM and anatta]. Only a refinement of view.” ~ John Tan, 2019

Session Start: Monday, March 16, 2009

(11:19 AM) AEN: if im not wrong ramana maharshi is still talking about stage 4 rite
he's not talking about no subject but union of subject/object... he still talks about brahman
(11:21 AM) Thusness: yeah
(11:21 AM) Thusness: in Buddhism, after stage 5 and refining our experience of emptiness and DO, even an arising breath is as great as brahman. 😳
(11:22 AM) Thusness: an arising thought, an arising breathe, a re-sounding sound...all is maha. All feels universe. There is no need to hold on to a self.
(11:23 AM) Thusness: Think should make this as a stage.
or a phase of insight
(11:23 AM) Thusness: Entering Maha, all is clear.
if you ask a person that chant, what is universe?
he says "OMmmmm"
(11:24 AM) Thusness: he says "Amitoufo"
(11:24 AM) Thusness: If you ask some one that practice 'breathing', he say just this breath.
(11:25 AM) Thusness: if you ask one in zazen, he say just this sitting
(11:25 AM) Thusness: events and activities are buddha nature in reality.

Commenting on a monk who realized anatta through AtR, “Yes good. As a monk unlike us because we think so

much 🤣, once he gets to this point when both sense of observer and observed disappeared into non-dual sitting, just relax the mind. Be natural and spontaneous, until it enters the 3 states.

Don't be focused, be open and spacious. Problem with most of us is even after anatta, the mind has so many thoughts creating confusions that we are unable to have very deep and mature taste of no mind in natural state until the bliss burns away all doubts and confusions. So we need to equip ourselves with thorough de-construction techniques and see through all the mental constructs.

Like and dislike won't go away that fast as the strength of openness and energy aren't there yet to fill the body mind.

Is your no-mind strong immediately after sleep in the morning and then into the day?” – John Tan, 2021

Practice after anatta becomes Dogen’s practice-enlightenment.

Original Enlightenment vs Practice-Enlightenment

> John Tan
>
> When Dogen was still a monk in Tendai School, he was puzzled and couldn't understand the teaching of "original enlightenment". If we were originally enlightened, how can we be lost? Unsatisfied he traveled to China in search for answers and when he returned back to Japan, he began promoting "practice-enlighthment". What did Dogen realize from this koan of "original enlightenment" into "practice-enlightenment"?
>
> Those that went for the ATR gathering don't answer ah 🤣.
>
> 2
>
> · Reply
>
> · 22h · Edited
>
> Mr. RDT
>
> John Tan
>
> anatta is a seal. Its permament in the sens it is always already so, originally so. Its not permament substance but more like - impermanence is permament.
>
> Not seeing that however one suffers like a beggar who sleeps on a rock with precious stone inside. He is free of poverty altough his ignorance covers that. Or like water. Water is pure, limpid and clear. It can look though as if water is unclear due to the mud of obscurations. Practice is resting (samatha) so the mud settles down and seeing (vipassana) so one recognises the natural state of water.

Also koan about wind being permament and penetrating everywhere comes to mind. One still practises fanning to cool the suffering and refresh the mind distracted with it.

Just some ramblings that came to me when I saw your comment 🙂

1

· Reply

· 22h · Edited

John Tan

Mr. RDT

is this the first time you hear this koan and and has an intuitive immediate direct recognition? Or you have heard of this koan and had contemplated it before?

· Reply

· 22h · Edited

Mr. RDT

John Tan

about your comment its the first time I see it worded like that.

Though Ive contemplated similar themes and pointers. I think most of all your pointer of Anatta being a seal has triggered the recognition.

Post-anatta Ive came to see Buddha nature teachings as hinting at that.

· Reply

· 22h · Edited

John Tan

Mr. RDT

well said. When I heard of this koan shortly after anatta insight, I too have a direct immediate recognition and I was telling the ATR gathering yesterday that Soh Wei Yu

was too lazy to contemplate when I asked him about this koan post his anatta insight 🤣🤣🤣.

Indeed this is similar to anatta insight. When no self/Self is seen through, seen is just seen and heard is just heard. When original enlightenment is seen through, sitting is just sitting, walking is just walking, and sleeping is just sleeping -- practice enlightenment!

2

· Reply

· 21h · Edited

Soh Wei Yu

John Tan

I can't remember when I first read about practice-enlightenment, but it has resonated with me from the very early years... I also like this one:

No Buddha is Conscious of its Existence [of having a Perfect-nature]

"By his fifteenth year one burning question became the core around which his spiritual strivings revolved: "If, as the sutras say, our Essential-nature is Bodhi (perfection), why did all Buddhas have to strive for enlightenment and perfection?" His dissatisfaction with the answers he received at Mount Hiei led him eventually to Eisai-zenji, who had brought the teachings of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism from China to Japan. Eisai's reply to Dogen's question was: "No Buddha is conscious of its existence [that is, of this Essential-nature], while cats and oxen [that is the grossly deluded] are aware of it." In other words, Buddhas, precisely because they are Buddhas, no longer think of having or not having a Perfect-nature; only the deluded think in such terms. At these words Dogen had an inner realization which dissolved his deep-seated doubt."

-- recommended reading, Yasutani-roshi's Introductory Lectures on Zen Training (it's a practical text on Zazen and Koan training)

2

· Reply

· 21h

Soh Wei Yu

My journal entry 25th February 2012

I see Shikantaza (The Zen meditation method of “Just Sitting”) as the natural expression of realization and enlightenment.

But many people completely misunderstand this... they think that practice-enlightenment means there is no need for realization, since practicing is enlightenment. In other words, even a beginner is as realized as the Buddha when meditating.

This is plain wrong and thoughts of the foolish.

Rather, understand that practice-enlightenment is the natural expression of realization... and without realization, one will not discover the essence of practice-enlightenment.

As I told my friend/teacher 'Thusness', “I used to sit meditation with a goal and direction. Now, sitting itself is enlightenment. Sitting is just sitting. Sitting is just the activity of sitting, air con humming, breathing. Walking itself is enlightenment. Practice is not done for enlightenment but all activity is itself the perfect expression of enlightenment/buddha-nature. There is nowhere to go."

I see no possibility of directly experiencing this unless one has clear direct non-dual insight. Without realizing the primordial purity and spontaneous perfection of this instantaneous moment of manifestation as Buddha-nature itself, there will always be effort and attempt at 'doing', at achieving something... whether it be mundane states of calmness, absorption, or supramundane states of awakening or liberation... all are just due to the ignorance of the true nature of this instantaneous moment.

However, non-dual experience can still be separated into:

1) One Mind

- lately I have been noticing that majority of spiritual teachers and masters describe non-dual in terms of One Mind. That is, having realized that there is no subject-object/perceiver-perceived division or dichotomy, they subsume everything to be Mind only, mountains and rivers all are Me - the one undivided essence appearing as the many.

Though non-separate, the view is still of an inherent metaphysical essence. Hence non-dual but inherent.

2) No Mind

Where even the 'One Naked Awareness' or 'One Mind' or a Source is totally forgotten and dissolved into simply scenery, sound, arising thoughts and passing scent. Only the flow of self-luminous transience.

....

However, we must understand that even having the experience of No Mind is not yet the realization of Anatta. In the case of No Mind, it can remain a peak experience. In fact, it is a natural progression for a practitioner at One Mind to occasionally enter into the territory of No Mind... but because there is no breakthrough in terms of view via realization, the latent tendency to sink back into a Source, a One Mind is very strong and the experience of No Mind will not be sustained stably. The practitioner may then try his best to remain bare and non-conceptual and sustain the experience of No Mind through being naked in awareness, but no breakthrough can come unless a certain realization arises.

In particular, the important realization to breakthrough this view of inherent self is the realization that Always Already, never was/is there a self - in seeing always only just the seen, the scenery, shapes and colours, never a seer! In hearing only the audible tones, no hearer! Just activities, no agent! A process of dependent origination itself rolls and knows... no self, agent, perceiver, controller therein.

It is this realization that breaks down the view of 'seer-seeing-seen', or 'One Naked Awareness' permanently by realizing that there never was a 'One Awareness' - 'awareness', 'seeing', 'hearing' are only labels for the everchanging sensations and sights and sounds, like the word 'weather' don't point to an unchanging entity but the everchanging stream of rain, wind, clouds, forming and parting momentarily...

Then as the investigation and insights deepen, it is seen and experienced that there is only this process of dependent origination, all the causes and conditions coming together in this instantaneous moment of activity, such that when eating the apple it is like the universe eating the apple, the universe typing this message, the universe hearing the sound... or the universe is the sound. Just that... is Shikantaza. In seeing only the seen, in sitting only the sitting, and the whole universe is sitting... and it couldn't be otherwise when there is no self, no meditator apart from meditation. Every moment cannot 'help' but be practice-enlightenment... it is not even the result of concentration or any form of contrived effort... rather it is the natural authentication of the realization, experience and view in real-time.

Zen Master Dogen, the proponent of practice-enlightenment, is one of the rare and clear jewels of Zen Buddhism who have very deep experiential clarity about anatta and dependent origination. Without deep realization-experience of anatta and dependent origination in real time, we can never understand what Dogen is pointing to... his words may sound cryptic, mystical, or poetic, but actually they are simply pointing to this.

Someone 'complained' that Shikantaza is just some temporary suppressing of defilements instead of the permanent removal of it. However if one realizes anatta then it is the permanent ending of self-view, i.e. traditional stream-entry.

1

· Reply

· 21h

John Tan

Soh Wei Yu

din know you wrote this. Means you did put in some effort 🤣.

4

· Reply

· 21h · EditedReply

- · 20m
-
- Also see: Original Enlightenment and Original Nature is a wrong view / How did Ignorance originate etc

https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/posts/6800059393368766/?__cft__[0]=AZWn-HqxwnBtz-2H_23CLk00Am-8mlXpTp318eBboN8x9BkUaezuu_vgYN7xGiMb2XRvlH5dTQqgL70N1MIXIcHNygA-vq1hVFhzv7FB8c7-nEOWMprtTLAZUJZ0OwyUz5rrLKadSHpmSiPdbjwuxV9mOvN05jESowpt0_iTL3Tgpb5Ow9pkrtVDWDnAspGH5CU&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R

Soh Wei Yu

Admin

· 0t5h3fSp45ts27uureh6u2dc8c ·

New article by John Tan under the Must Read section in the AtR blog:

Don't Bombard with our conversations and Don't Stereotype

Soh, I seriously think you should not keep bombarding people with our conversations. Don't get over excited with your anatta insights and experiences. Don't become an anatta bot stereotyping and categorizing people into the 7 phases of insights. I know you are extremely sincere and compassionate, but it is unhelpful and unskillful in my opinion.

I am not a teacher, neither are u. If you want to teach and guide, you should seriously consider taking up your teacher's offer and start with Ren Cheng as she has been looking for successor since I know you otherwise it is more appropriate to lead those sincere practitioners to right teachers. Unlike us, those teachers are dedicated full-time; have right settings

and environment; have a community of sincere practitioners that mutually support each other; have all the right lineages; and have access to all the frontier knowledge that are passed down from generation to generation from their lineage masters. Y not just do that?

As for those layman practitioners that for some reasons still prefer to go on their own asking for some general guides post anatta insights, I think they can focus on the 5 following points:

1. Extend the insight of anatta, the de-reification process to all events and phenomena. MMK comes handy here. It will help one investigate most of the subtle assumptions we held to be "true" in a hypnotic way.

2. Open up our body and go deeply into body-awareness. This is critical imo. Less intellectual activities and more body-awareness. Post anatta and along the path, due to the de-construction process, the energy released from unconsciously holding of our mental constructs can be quite overwhelming. It may also be due to other reasons, for example, attachment to non-dual experiences and as a result it will engender discomfort to both our mind and body.

3. So opening up our body is key at this phase. The imbalance can be released by massage, non-inflammatory diet, qi gong, tai chi movements, yoga or any other body awareness exercises. Just open up our body and bring awareness to our body to complement the anatta insight and less intellectual activities.

4. If after that, the practitioner can intuit directly the relationship between mind, prana and body and wish to pursue his knowledge further on how the energy system works, they can then look for experienced teachers in this space to guide them. You are not into this, hence, do not advise people on what you are unsure and have no experience.

5. Lastly, bring the insight of anatta into our daily activities, meet conditions and engage.

I sincerely hope you can make some changes to your approach towards those that seek your advices. Do put serious thought on it. Happy journey!

Labels: John Tan |

29 Comments

-

Soh Wei Yu

Author

Admin

On the teaching part, as I have said many times in AtR guide and blog, I have no wish nor time to teach. I recommend that people find a good teacher.

1 · 4h

- · □ Soh Wei Yu

Author

Admin

I am not sure if AtR can reach to a lot of people in general. This is also why I generally pass people The Power of Now to friends, rather than the 1000+ pages AtR guide. Even then only some may really appreciate TPON, a few of them.

- · 1h
- · □ Anisor Marie

Soh, respectfully I get what he's saying as well as you.
But my teacher says, "When you know how to listen, everyone is the guru"
-Ram Dass
😉

3□ · 4h

- ·

Edited

□ Yin Ling
Soh Wei Yu, soh, you and John had always made it clear that you guys are not teacher and don’t wish to be one. But I personally have benefitted too much from your sharing and this group so.. I am not sure what to think about you completely not sharing too 😅
I am guessing John probably don’t want to do more harm than good but I personally had quite a lot of good coming from you both. So that’s that.

6

-
- · 3h
-

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Yin Ling
I will probably still share and write when im free, though i also hope for more participation from others or a community helping each other rather than me becoming a guide. Im glad though that recently many people with insights have been stepping up to share from their experience.
But i guess i have to be careful not to blatantly copy paste from convos (its just too convenient to do so and save so much time having to retype everything)
Actually I heard a voice when praying to bodhisattva where the bodhisattva (either tara or guan yin i think) telling me with confidence “your wishes will be fulfilled. Just focus on helping people.” That was months before my tara encounter. I didnt tell anyone about that until today i told john tan, because you know, i was doubting if the voice is my own delusion, until the tara encounter made me think maybe it could be someone.. but anyway i digress.

Anyway i shared with john tan and he said “Yes. Helping others is good but not over promotion.”
“And don't involve ATR with anything related to $$$.”
(Well i have no intention to monetize anything)

12

- · 3h
- ·

  Edited

Yin Ling
Soh Wei Yu that’s very lovely, thanks for sharing.
The thing is, it’s very hard to find a community with sincere practitioners so creating this community is really great. Sometimes if you are on your own in your own community you will be crazy doing all this work 😂😂and then one start doubting one self... should I continue or not.. am I really crazy ? 🤣🤣
So yeah. End of the day, still massively good work. I have always been grateful for finding this and think others do too.

5□ · 3h

- ·

  Edited

□ Alessandro Socio Migliori
Soh Wei Yu you are one of the best dharma resource on the web and all this work for free, i have benefitted so much from this site and your help so thank you

3□ · 56m
□ Michael Hernandez
Soh Wei Yu I understand about the ease of copy and paste.
But it is far better to adapt it to the inclination of each individual. We each feel the emptiness of existence intensely. We are focused into our intention to experience the sensation & cognition of phenomena as a verification of our beingness.
That's how I feel when I do anything even writing this now as I myself post it to you. I am verified.

1□ · 17m
□ Chris Wilson

Soh Wei Yu I saw the post and know why you're saying, "be careful and not just post quotes of conversations" my thoughts when I read what was said, was that you doing that is a way of saving time instead of retyping everything all the time. The AtR document is huge. When someone is asking a question sometimes pointing to the direction that's already been written in AtR is perfect! I'm one of the mostly silent members that reads your quotes when I see a relevant question... well I read most of the posts in the group. I'm friends with Angelo and work with him a bunch, but the quotes you've posted along with his guidance have pointed me in the right direction plenty of times. Even though I'm working with an amazing teacher, I've still had great insights from stuff you've posted! Love you man! You're helping people. Signed - One of the lurkers 😀

1□

- ○
  - · 13m

□ Liu Zhi Guan
"Soh, I seriously think you should not keep bombarding people with our conversations."
Please dont stop,I quite enjoy the edifying conversation due to the thought processes.😝

1

-
- · 3h

-

Alessandro Socio Migliori
Liu Zhi Guan one day i was scrolling reddit and found a huge wall of text, and said to myself "i guess this is from soh" and yes it was lol

1

- □
  - ○
  - · 54m

□ Anisor Marie
It seems it is up to each of us to take what parts we want to, and need, in order to grow. Some may find getting a teacher and fully submerging themselves to following the Buddhist path is the right way for them. Others may take bits and pieces from all. It seems there is no right way for everyone and no wrong way for everyone, but rather people each have their own way and path to follow. Many options, the trick is to find/allow the one that works best at this point in our lives and go with it.

3

□ · 3h

□ James Wolanyk

I think it's wonderful that you are open and secure enough to share this message publicly, Soh Wei Yu. Thank you for your help and advice on here... It shows a lot of maturity to take John's feedback in this way!

5 · 3h

-

Soh Wei Yu

Author

Admin

James Wolanyk

I am always open to share these messages. Have you seen the one I shared, the one john tan wrote after he left this group?

1 · 2h

□ Soh Wei Yu

Author

Admin

James Wolanyk anyway from day one john tan didnt like attention and prefers to be alone. That is why i was the one who created the blog and posted things.. and when i created the blog he still wasnt sure if it was the right thing to do. But im glad it has been helpful to some but he is right in not portraying ourselves as teachers. Also wasnt my intention to portray us as teachers

2 · 2h

- ·

  Edited

-

James Wolanyk

Soh Wei Yu To me, this has always seemed like a discussion group (not a teacher thing). I didn't read John Tan's statement when he left - can you link it here? Thanks.

□ □ ·

Reply

□ ·

- □ · 2h

□ Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
James Wolanyk
https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/posts/2650264745014939/?__cft__[0]=AZUZtziS-YjxlTQ2sB9WqiiNyMnLiTX2QfVdTiPJ3pPdku6WineBz0tkl3BBy-slLEp3Otq7d-Th6sU-n1w6EzFRnILmtRiBY8GjC2xK4ILwDRwZiBvgPLpPgC-qhSLKzUM&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R

1 · 2h
□ Yin Ling
Soh Wei Yu sometimes it’s personalities too 😉
We don’t really lose our personalities even post anatta do we ?
I really think it’s ok to do what you think it’s right on your side.

1□ · 2h
□ Matt Joe Garrett
Soh Wei Yu Soh, this group and blog has helped and guided in immeasurable ways. Tweaking how you approach guidance may be what John was saying but I just see what you've 'done' as beautiful, compassionate and helpful for so many. Thank you

3□

- ○
  - ▪ · 1h

□ J.P. Hamilton
It took me a year to find this group and I was pretty lost that whole time because I didn't have any background in this. My situation happened by complete accident! If you hadn't reached out to me on reddit, I don't know what would be going on. For the first time, I feel like I have a direction and a place where I am comfortable discussing these things. I am utterly amazed at the amount of work and dedication you have put into this. Extremely grateful, too. You might not be a teacher, but learning is happening just the same. This is the right place for me now.

5□ · 2h
□ Jayson MPaul
I never took these as teachings, just pointers from dharma friends. I really find the conversations to helpful. Many times I'll reread a conversation and find a different subtle point I missed the last time. I hope you will still continue to

post unseen before conversations to the blog. Many of my insights happened after reading some potent pointing from you both.

5□ · 1h

□ Aaron M Beck

These words have a flavor like they couldn't possibly /not/ have come at exactly this moment. feels like the whole universe talking. absolute perfection of the whole unfolding

1

John Tan’s post anatta advise in 2022:

1)

The 90 day cycle is almost up. Moment to moment mindfulness can fluctuate and vary, but the insight has not reversed. It's been non-dual ever since I read your explanation of Bahiya. Duality has not re-established itself. Quite unbelievable. Whenever I ask Soh a question I'm usually bombarded with 10 articles lol. It's important to read all of them, but wanted to ask you what you suggest to orient myself towards at this point or if you have any pointers for practice. Catching covid had zero affect on this natural state. More distraction because I was binge watching shows all day, but whenever there's mindfulness or recognition of presence its totally non-dual.

07:28

Understand the meaning empty and non-arisen. Self is one reification. Arising, abiding and cessation are also the product of reifications.

1. See through these conceptual notions analytically.
2. Understand that whatever arises in dependent do not arise, abide or cease.
3. Link ur understandings with absence/presence. Read the article on the 4 levels of understanding emptiness and 2 fold emptying. (http://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2015/01/four-levels-of-insight-into-emptiness_9.html) (http://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2013/04/daniel-post-on-anattaemptiness.html)
4. Compare the difference:

Insight of anatta but still with arising, abiding and ceasing
VS
Absence/Presence

Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness

Also see: An Expansion on the Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness Thusness had a casual discussion with me regarding the various phases...

awakeningtoreality.com

Links: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2015/01/four-levels-of-insight-into-emptiness_9.html , https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2013/04/daniel-post-on-anattaemptiness.html

2)

Happy CNY John . Have to personally Thank you for all the help. Hope the festivities is Singapore is ok and not too affected by covid !

Lol my maid just got COVID. But everything is fine and well. Thks and happy new year to u too!

Aiyo. Seems like everyone will get it eventually. I'm only worried for my older parents and grand parent.

My partner in uk whole family 20 ppl caught covid after a Xmas gathering last week , all after 3 vaccines

For intensities of one's empty luminous clarity, understand that "intensities" doesn't imply effort...it is as natural and as light as feather, effortless. However in the six entries and exits (eyes, ears, nose...etc) the intensities vary. Some r more intuitive on colors and forms, some r on sound, some one sensations...so balance them...

Then:
1. presence and absence in actual taste must be clear. See whether the link and what I said about the earth element help u balance ur presence 😆. This is absence and presence in vivid clarity, in taste.

2. The other u must look at is emptiness of imputed notions into freedom from all elaborations.

No need to rush, go for 1 first as I think it will be easier for u now given Ur insight. Too much thinking is not so helpful now...lol

You replied to Ling

> My partner in uk whole family 20 ppl caught covid after a Xmas gathering last week , all after 3 vaccines

Some are serious even after 3 jabs, but some r mild.

Yes the intensities varies, sounds are very intense for me probably coz the non dual of sounds happen for me first.

11:15

When you say presence and absence, absence meaning intuiting the emptiness of said sensation ?

Seen

You replied to Ling

> When you say presence and absence, absence meaning intuiting the emptiness of said sensation ?

Yes.

And most importantly, be humble so that in a time when there is no teacher in a dharma degeneration age, let everything, every event, every situation be ur teacher; otherwise u ended like soh critisizing this and that teacher hasn't has anatta insight.😆😆🤦

Ok. Yes it's important no be humble

To*

But it's really hard to get teachings nowadays. Really really hard. Maybe just me 😂

It's like that...lol. There r some Chinese zen masters that can express well this anatta insight like Hong Weng Liang, like 慧律法师 ...their expressions will sometimes help. Soh has lots of their links.

Roshi Meido Moore is quite good also although expressions and emphasis may differ.

Oh I see. Yeah thich naht hant writings help too

Yes.

Ok will look up their writing. Still slowly balance the energy now. One day never do some yoga or massage the energy becomes so uncomfortable 🤦

Yes and Ur diet. Ur take too heaty food. No good for Ur yoga also.

Aa

Mr. S:

Qi gong has been helpful

And Zhan Zhuang

.....

After anatta realization, there can be different depths of actualizing it. Although the first few months after anatta (late 2010 for Soh) was intense and blissful and samadhi all the time even in daily living, it sort of normalized a little (for Soh) but another breakthrough in 2019 led to further intensity of actualization. This is also what John Tan has been pointing to me in articles like https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2013/03/rainbow-body-and-thusness-advice-to-me.html and conversations like these:

[10:49 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: If your Friend wants to know more about your house...is it big or small, how aircons are there, how many rooms are there, you live what floor...I will describe a bit then tell him better for him to go there himself then he can find out whatever he needs...difficult to explain in words
[10:50 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: Right?
[10:50 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Ya

[10:51 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: Therefore the wise knows when to apply address, when to tell him details, when to advice him better to have him visit you directly.
[10:54 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[10:57 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: Similarly if you want to understand "openness", by saying "Openness is liberation, desirelessness and freedom from self"....cannot get you closer to openness
[11:01 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: Becoz what you need is to know how many rooms your house hv, what Color is your room...etc. you are not learning how to spell and write the alphabets of your address.
[11:02 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: you want to smell the air of your room, you want to see the living Colours of your room, you want to feel the air from your aircon, you want to experience the hardness of your floor... You want to jump on your bed ... That is what you want to know about openness.
[11:03 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. Ya
[11:05 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Its like all the meanings like awareness, emotions, sensations dissolve into the textures. You can't say this is emotion that is sensation this is awareness except inferentially
[11:05 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: There is no desire because there is no seeking or avoiding manifestation. There is no sign and there is no solidity
[11:06 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: So knowing what you want, you have to have discipline and practice and truly know. Gone are the days of spelling and writing down the alphabets...and telling me "Openness is liberation, desirelessness and freedom from self"...is still spelling and writing down your address.
[11:06 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: This too -->There is no desire because there is no seeking or avoiding manifestation. There is no sign and there is no solidity
[11:06 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: you have not entered the way of zen
[11:07 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[11:11 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: Freedom from self... You must taste the joy from your heart for example when helping an old lady carry something when you see she is struggling with loads of stuff...
[11:13 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: You forget yourself, breathe and smell the air outside your house. Feel the saliva slowly move from your mouth, throat, oesophagus...etc
[11:14 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: Fully alive, full open but without self, without thought....
[11:14 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[11:16 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: Until you can open up your body and fully feel with joy, intensity and vibrancy...without self and thoughts .... Then tell me. Don't tell me stuff like "no desire because there is no seeking or avoiding manifestation. There is no sign and there is no solidity"
[11:18 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[11:20 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: If your mind is desireless and in great contentment...if awareness is transparent and crystal, if your entire body-mind is alive and vibrant...don't worry... you will not be able to hide... Your people ard you will feel your vibrancy and radiance.
[11:20 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: And peace.
[11:20 PM, 3/7/2016] John Tan: You don't have to talk.
[11:20 PM, 3/7/2016] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..

[7:44 AM, 3/8/2016] John Tan: If you enter the gate of Anatta (non-dual) and feel everything directly and non-conceptually, you must know the different level too...tell me what are the few distinct level of sensing directly and non-conceptually.

Buddha:

“1 “Bhikshus, I will teach you the unconditioned and the path leading to the unconditioned.
Listen, bhikshus, pay close attention to it, I will speak.”
“Yes, bhante!” the monks replied the Blessed One.
1.2 The Blessed One said this:
2 “And what, bhikshus, is the unconditioned (asakhata)?
The destruction of lust, the destruction of hate, and the destruction of delusion—this is called the unconditioned.
3 And what, bhikshus, is the path leading to the unconditioned?
Calm and insight [Samatha and vipassana]—this is called the path leading to the unconditioned.
4 Thus, bhikshus, I have taught you the unconditioned and the path leading to the unconditioned.
5 Bhikshus, whatever a teacher should do out of compassion for the good of disciples, for the sake of their welfare, it has been done to you by me.
6 These, bhikshus, are the foot of trees;75 these are empty places.76 Meditate,77 bhikshus! Be not heedless! Regret not later! This is our instruction to you.”78” - Buddha in (Mūla) Samatha Vipassanā Sutta

"After this insight [of anatta], one must also be clear of the way of anatta and the path of practice. Many wrongly conclude that because there is no-self, there is nothing to do and nothing to practice. This is precisely using "self view" to understand "anatta" despite having the insight.

It does not mean because there is no-self, there is nothing to practice; rather it is because there is no self, there is only ignorance and the chain of afflicted activities. Practice therefore is about overcoming ignorance and these chain of afflictive activities. There is no agent but there is attention. Therefore practice is about wisdom, vipassana, mindfulness and concentration. If there is no mastery over these practices, there is no liberation. So one should not bullshit and psycho ourselves into the wrong path of no-practice and waste the invaluable insight of anatta. That said, there is the passive mode of practice of choiceless awareness, but one should not misunderstand it as the "default way" and such practice can hardly be considered "mastery" of anything, much less liberation." ~ John Tan

“Anatta not only realizes the marvelous spontaneous functioning, anatta also clearly experience the afflictive chain being rolled out from ignorance to the formation of self. There is no self always, but there is the afflictive sense of self formation from ignorance. The path is therefore the thorough exhaustion of ignorance in the 3 states (waking, dreaming and sleeping)... ... [There are] differences in degree of overcoming *[thoroughness of exhausting ignorance in the 3 states completely]*” - John Tan, 2019

“Now with your current insight and understanding, what should be the right approach to end this lingering sense of self? Your practice should be always realization, experience and views. Your experience must refine [to be] like the place where there is no heat or cold*. Your anatta view must be extended to whatever arises. Your realization must extend your anatta to dependent origination.” - John Tan, early 2011

*The Place Where There is No Heat or Cold: A monk asked Tozan, “When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?”
Tozan said, “Why don’t you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?”
The monk said, “What is the place where there is no cold or heat?”
Tozan said, “When it’s cold, the cold kills you; when it’s hot, the heat kills you.”
This is not advice to “accept” your situation, as some commentators have suggested, but a direct expression of authentic practice and enlightenment. Master Tozan is not saying, “When cold, shiver; when hot, sweat,” nor is he saying, “When cold, put on a sweater; when hot, use a fan.” In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe. The heat kills you, and there is only heat in the whole universe. The fragrance of incense kills you, and there is only the fragrance of incense in the whole universe. The sound of the bell kills you, and there is only “boooong” in the whole universe...
~The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing, Ted Biringer

“When anatta matures, one is fully and completely integrated into whatever arises till there is no difference and no distinction.

When sound arises, fully and completely embraced with sound yet non-attached. Similarly, in life we must be fully engaged yet non-attached” - John Tan

“As John Tan pointed out before, even though anatta realization allows one to penetrate and dissolve the I, agent, subject, perceiver, experiencer, it does not necessarily immediately dissolve the ‘mine’ bond and attachment. By our karmic/deep conditioning, grasping at phenomena as objects that are ‘mine’ may still occur out of habit. That requires deeper wisdom and insight into emptiness and dependent origination to resolve. And it is only through completely dissolving all traces of I-making and mine-making that one achieves liberation. That is the end of all activities of appropriation, grasping, craving and identifying [objects as mine] – it is truly the end of suffering. In the seen only the seen.” – Soh, 2020

The following is a translation from the Gandhari version of the “Not Yours Sutra,” which is also paralleled in the Samyutta Nikaya*:*

The Buddha said: “Monks, abandon what is not yours. Abandoning it will lead to benefit and happiness. Now, what is it that is not yours? Form is not yours; abandon it. Abandoning it will lead to benefit and happiness. Sensation, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness are not yours; abandon them. Abandoning them will lead to benefit and happiness.

“Here is an example: suppose someone were to cut down the grass, wood, branches, leaves, and foliage here in the Jeta forest, or were to take it away or burn it, or do whatever he wished with it. What do you think? Would you think, ‘That person is cutting us, or taking us away, or burning us, or doing whatever he wished with us’?”

The monks answered, “Of course not, Venerable Sir.”

“And why is that?”

“Because this forest, Venerable Sir, is not ourselves; nor does it belong to us.”

“In just the same way, abandon what is not yours. Abandoning it will lead to benefit and happiness. In just the same way, form is not yours; abandon it. Abandoning it will lead to benefit and happiness. Sensation, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness are not yours; abandon them. Abandoning them will lead to benefit and happiness.”

Thus spoke the Lord.

~ *Wisdom*

Continue to refine one’s insights and view based on dependent origination and emptiness. See STAGE 6 below.

“John Tan
Just free ourselves from sense of self first, then it is probably 60% done. After then gradually to all notions into supreme purity.
· Reply · 1d
Arthur Deller
John Tan I like that. Where did the 60% factor in!?!? No self is true. For whom would the other 40% apply. 😎
· Reply · 1d
John Tan
Arthur Deller an arbitrary number...haha. "For whom" is within the 60%. If we start from other notions like cause and effect, will most likely end up as intellectual entertainment. 😝
· Reply · 1d
Arthur Deller
in the words of Maximus. “Are you not entertained”.
I’ve had enough intellectual stimulation to last an eon or so.
In thinking no thinker
Thought with no thinking.
· Reply · 1d
John Tan
If both thinker and thinking are deconstructed, why do you keep that thought?

· Reply · 1d
Arthur Deller
John Tan I don’t. They just come and go. Like pixels. Fuzzy characters with no landing place.
· Reply · 1d
John Tan
Arthur Deller then notion of "coming", "landing" and "going" must be subjected to the same scrutiny like thinker, thinking and thought.
· Reply · 1d · Edited
Arthur Deller
John Tan I had a feeling that you picked up on that. Was gonna go into the non-arising via DO, but my brain 🧠 said it isn’t necessary.
· Reply · 1d
Arthur Deller
John Tan you just lit a 🔥. In deep samadhi and insight meditation that’s very clear. On the go throughout the day while interacting, not as much.
· Reply · 1d
John Tan
Arthur Deller distinguishing appearances and imputed notions added to mere appearances is a life long journey and indeed, daily engagement is the real meditation.
· Reply · 1d · Edited
Arthur Deller
John Tan Hence the other 40%. Nice.
· Reply · 1d” - https://www.facebook.com/john.tan.9231712/posts/3879135162144236?__cft__[0]=AZW9RMcYxD4U-putKbNMFwVgGJ1iKh64xsoaT3Tc3EzfVLkeuA5VG4CquWq5ipwB8kPc1Wbbj1joppYUOo7ScaavSsmh_FaCwwogRuobR1hhpoNbrWMOTtQla5jMo00gw6akvIMQebu92niQQFO-vKUCtXSP5eM-vMSfM8WiOWAx5Of804uq1Q3AXWtzLG72mSo&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R

[17/6/18, 6:53:49 PM] John Tan: Chariot analogy is next step of anatta
[17/6/18, 6:54:32 PM] John Tan: It is THE view for practitioners that has arisen insight of anatta
[17/6/18, 6:54:40 PM] John Tan: But there is a catch
[17/6/18, 6:54:48 PM] John Tan: It is in the way it is presented
[17/6/18, 6:56:00 PM] John Tan: In fact anatta is the most key and base insight after knowing dzogchen, mahamudra, madhyamaka, zen
[17/6/18, 6:56:46 PM] John Tan: you need anatta to beam through dzogchen and mahamudra but to have a stable base you need some further insight into mmk *[Soh: Nagarjuna’s teaching on Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*].

“Entities do not exist In their causes,

in their conditions,
in aggregations of many things,
or in individual things.
Therefore, all entities are empty.”
—— Nāgārjuna

Sevenfold reasoning of the Chariot

“There is no chariot which is other than its parts
There is no chariot which is the same as its parts
There is no chariot which possesses its parts
There is no chariot which depends on its parts
There is no chariot upon which the parts depend
There is no chariot which is the collection of its parts
There is no chariot which is the shape of its parts”

- Chandrakirti, on 'mere designation'

“Realization, Experience and Right View and my comments on "A" is "not-A", "not A" is "A"
Judith Blackstone, 'The Empathic Ground':
"Although nondual realization is considered, in Asian spiritual traditions to be an advanced level of spiritual attainment, I have found that for many people it is easily accessible. It is important to understand that nondual realization is a process. Complete nondual realization is said to be extremely rare, if it is possible at all. But an initial realization requires between one and three years of consistent practice intention."

I saw this quote in your forum thread Any living enlightened Master? I wonder why you quoted it, it doesn’t seem relevant. Nevertheless with the recent insight into anatta, I am sure you no more concur with Judith Blackstone that “Complete nondual realization is said to be extremely rare, if it is possible at all.” In fact not only is complete non-dual possible, it is simply the beginning. In the realm of no-mind, all experiences are implicitly non-dual and effortless. This should not be a mystery to you by now.

The purpose of bringing up Judith Blackstone quote is not to boast about one’s achievement but to convey an additional point in practice. That is in addition to experience and realization, you have to embrace the ‘right view’. I have mentioned to you in the article Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives, I will re-iterate it here:

To mature this realization, even direct experience of the absence of an agent will prove insufficient; there must also be a total new paradigm shift in terms of view; we must free ourselves from being bonded to the idea, the need, the urge and the

tendency of analyzing, seeing and understanding our moment to moment of experiential reality from a source, an essence, a center, a location, an agent or a controller and rest entirely on anatta and Dependent Origination.

Therefore despite the clear realization and right experience, seamlessness and effortlessness of non-dual experience will not be smooth without ‘right view’. The reason though obvious is often overlooked; if deep at the back of a practitioner’s mind he still hold the dualistic and inherent view, how is it possible to have seamless and effortless experience of in seeing, just scenery; in hearing, just sound? How unreserved, open and seamless can a practitioner be in transcending the self altogether into the transience? Hence equip oneself with a view that can integrate with the realization and experience, it will help practitioners progress more smoothly. Understanding the impact of view in practice is what I find lacking in many of your posts. You may want to look into it.

With regards to the attachment of view, it does not apply to practitioners that have gone pass certain phases of insights. Practitioners after certain phases of insights are constantly abolishing ground and are clear that whatever pith instructions and views are merely provisional. There are masters that caution practitioners and there are students that parrot their masters’ advises, so do not follow blindly. In fact if understood correctly every deepening of view is a giving up. In the case of anatta, it is the total elimination of Self.
"Bhikkhus, as purified and bright as this view is, if you covet, cherish, treasure and take pride in it, do you understand this Dhamma as comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up [i.e. crossing over] and not for the purpose of grasping?" "No, venerable sir." "Bhikkhus, as purified and bright as this view is, if you do not covet, cherish, treasure and take pride in it, would you then know this Dhamma as comparable to a raft, taught for the purpose of giving up [i.e. crossing over] and not for the purpose of grasping?" "Yes, venerable sir."
source: http://www.leighb.com/mn38.htm

Coming back to your practice, there are 3 experiences that you should be familiar:” – John Tan, 2011, continue reading in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/03/realization-experience-and-right-view_13.html

"In seeing six rewards, it's enough motivation for a monk to establish the perception of not-self with regard to all phenomena without exception. Which six? 'I won't be fashioned in connection with any world. My I-making will be stopped. My my-making will be stopped. I'll be endowed with uncommon knowledge.[1] I'll become one who rightly sees cause, along with causally-originated phenomena.' In seeing these six rewards, it's enough motivation for a monk to establish the perception of not-self with regard to all phenomena without exception." – Buddha

“Impossible to Discern Dependent Origination and See a Self
Two things for sharing today

1) Someone lurking in the AtR group just realised anatta recently after being stuck in I AM for many years, then went into nondual and anatta. I'll let him post about it on his own, or not, as he wishes.

2) Stian posted something in his group https://www.facebook.com/groups/1206265356138924/ Idappaccayata which John and I like, sharing it here:

(Also related, read this Buddha's teaching:

https://suttacentral.net/mn38/en/bodhi

Consciousness is named after the conditions that give rise to it.)

Stian Gudmundsen Høiland
Admin · 16 hrs
Try this. Go slow. Read the comments. Then try again. Slowly.
*
So I am seeing
Let’s use it to investigate dependent arising
Contact
Three factors; what are they?
Eye, form & visual awareness
What does the Buddha say?
"Visual awareness arises dependent
On eye & form"
So, while closely contemplating seeing, consider right now:
"The conditions for visual awareness are currently complete,
thus I have this visual awareness
About this visual awareness, depending on eyes,
Were these eyes now to disappear—when they do eventually disappear—then, this visual awareness, dependent on eyes, would stop
And,
also for this visual awareness—dependent on *form*—
Suddenly, would there be no form at all,
then too,
this visual awareness—dependent on form—would stop"
"So this visual awareness is dependent,
And not independent
Such is its arising, such is its ceasing"
Dependent on eye & form
Arises visual awareness
"It simply arises & ceases 'like so'"
"'So' it comes; 'so' it goes"

5You, Alejandro Serrano, Yacine Haffar and 2 others
8 CommentsSeen by 37
CommentLike

Comments

- Active NowStian Gudmundsen Høiland So we see that it has a condition, on account of which presence it arises and absence it ceases.

  From having a condition, we see it is impermanent: If in response to the presence of the condition it arises, then in response to the absence of the condition it ceases. Having arisen dependent on a cause, it is thus impermanent, since—having arisen *in dependence* on the presence of the cause—the absence of the cause entails its cessation.

  Consider closely this part:

  > If in response to the presence of the condition it arises...

  Why is it that we get from that the consequence of:

  > ... then in response to the absence of the condition it ceases.

  It is because the arising is bound to the state of presence (of the condition). When the condition is no longer present, then—since it arose *dependent* on (the presence of) that condition—it will thus cease.

  So, "arising with a cause" necessitates "cessation when the cause disappears".

  What becomes understood here is called impermanence, and when that understanding goes even further what is understood is called "conditionedness".2
- Like
- · Reply
- · 16h
- · Edited
- Active NowStian Gudmundsen Høiland Being a conditioned thing, it is something "out from control". Dukkha, anatta.

  ... it is something completely determined by conditions—there is no "free" factor beside conditions that could otherwise overrule its conditions and make it arise or cease. In fact, such a thing would just be... a condition.

  Grasping/understanding conditionedness is very close to what is called dispassion. The coming and going of things—and quite so by themselves—keeps the mind from fascinating about things as-if they were permanent and could be controlled by a single entity (this "as-if" attitude is quite unconscious and hidden from us), and this leads to a hands-off approach, i.e. doesn’t grasp and cling.

Emptiness, here, very specifically means what one intuits as the lack of "being worthy of" or "deserving" grasping and clinging. By understanding conditionedness one intuits the reason of not deserving grasping and not being worthy of clinging. This intuited "quality" lies very close to what is called dukkha and anatta. What one thus intuits or understands is called "(the state of) being void", but which we get translated as "emptiness". The result of understanding how (thus conditioned) things (i.e. things that are conditioned as such, i.e. arises dependent on condition, i.e. is conditionally arisen, i.e. conditioned arising) are void is called many things, for example "dispassion". This dispassion is tantamount to non-involvement (atammayata?) with conditioned things, a slight turning away of the mind from conditioned things, which leads to what is called nibbāna and asaṅkhata.

Thus, by completely understanding dependent arising and conditionedness, the mind becomes dispassionate and does not grasp nor cling to anything conditioned. Consciousness naturally becoming calm and resting through dispassion, ceases from further movements of mind and mental activity.
By completely understanding the meaning of "conditioned", one finally comes to direct experience of what is called "unconditioned" (& "nirvana").3

- Like· Reply
  · 15h
  · Edited

- Active NowStian Gudmundsen Høiland In short, and about the thought "I am":

  When you contemplate dependent arising & ceasing of seeing (or "eye-contact"), you are unwittingly replacing the assumption of an agent of seeing.

  Somewhere in your psyche there is a belief-ing that seeing is an act performed by an agent.

  When you consider that this visual awareness right here depends on eye & form and that with this eye & form there is this visual awareness and that without this eye there would be no visual awareness and that without this form there would be no visual awareness, then "I am" with regards to seeing stops for as long as you remain in that understanding; there is then no "I am seeing", there is only seeing, no "I am" doing the seeing.

  > ... When for you there will be only the seen in reference to the seen, only the heard in reference to the heard, only the sensed in reference to the sensed, only the cognized in reference to the cognized, then, Bāhiya, there is no you in connection with that. When there is no you in connection with that, there is no you there. When there is no you there, you are neither here nor yonder nor between the two.

  > When a noble disciple has clearly seen with right wisdom this dependent origination and these dependently originated phenomena as they are, it’s impossible for them to turn back to the past, thinking: ‘Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? After being what, what did I become in the past?’ Or to turn forward to the future, thinking: ‘Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future? After being what, what will I become in the future?’ Or to be undecided about the present, thinking: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? This sentient being—where did it come from? And where will it go?’4

- Like· Reply
  · 16h
  · Edited

- 📷 Active NowStian Gudmundsen Høiland 📷 Now try it again. Slowly this time.
- Like· Reply
  · 16h

- 📷 Active NowStian Gudmundsen Høiland 📷 Did anyone at least get to the point where it clicks that without eye or without form visual awareness co-ceases (i.e. impermanence)?
- Like
-
- · Reply
- · 15h
- · Edited”

[8:40 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: You seldom see me use *[i.e. state]* appearance as consciousness.

[8:40 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: Buddha name consciousness along without the conditions that give rise to them. (Soh: https://suttacentral.net/mn38/en/bodhi)

[9:16 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: In bahiya sutta, Buddha did not talk about DO. But why is what stian said very good?

> When a noble disciple has clearly seen with right wisdom this dependent origination and these dependently originated phenomena as they are, it’s impossible for them to turn back to the past, thinking: ‘Did I exist in the past? Did I not exist in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? After being what, what did I become in the past?’ Or to turn forward to the future, thinking: ‘Will I exist in the future? Will I not exist in the future? What will I be in the future? How will I be in the future? After being what, what will I become in the future?’ Or to be undecided about the present, thinking: ‘Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? This sentient being—where did it come from? And where will it go?’4

[9:20 PM, 6/2/2020] John Tan: This is the part I am talking about. When I was telling you don't think of modulation of consciousness and why Buddha name consciousness with the conditions that give rise to it.

...

Soh: Also, one should deconstruct the sense that there are intrinsic luminosity/clarity or objects and characteristics or essence:

Jayson MPaul

42m ·

I was investigating Presence this morning and trying to probe into beliefs that are hidden or unquestioned. I saw that presence was still not emptied. It was assumed to have a clarity/luminosity as an attribute of it. This was giving it a subtle essence or reification. I saw that the clarity/luminosity was dependently designated on the IS-ness of presence.

Everything seemed to get "closer" or more intimate and somehow presence became more direct, more present, less fixed, less grasping. This was a nice release and thought I would share in case this opens anything up for others.
3 Comments

Comments

Nick Wilson
Thanks
Jayson MPaul
can you please describe how you were investigating Presence? ie. if I wanted to do the same, how would I go about it?

- · 1d

Jayson MPaul
Author

Nick Wilson
Sure. I'll give you the lead up to it as well since the mindset was probably a condition leading to the insight. Having got comfortable in presence (in the seeing, just the seen, no seer for all senses), I was reading this blurb from the blog: The section labelled "On Emptiness" in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../on-anatta-emptiness.... While this was happening I was investigating where is that voice that occurs when reading, is located. I had been getting more comfortable recently looking at where thoughts occur directly and not psyching myself out because they don't seem to exist in space. I did this for awhile noticing how the reading continues, the eyes move on their own, and this voice of the text is appearing as a vague somewhere. After getting really settled at looking at this voice and how it is non-local (doesn't have a location of itself) which gives a feeling of it's emptiness, I realized that presence itself is still being grasped at, specifically the clarity aspect. I investigated this by looking directly at presence itself (which also has no location) and seeing that it doesn't have clarity as an attribute as it's existence. More that there is presence and we give it the attribute "clarity" with our mind as a conceptual designation only. It doesn't inherently exist like that. At this point from my previous practices in seeing things as conceptual designations only, the mind saw presence was empty and stopped grasping it. At that moment I saw how there was still subtle grasping at the clarity of presence and how it was even nicer to let that go.

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On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

1

- ·

  Reply

- · 21h

Nick Wilson

That's fantastic, thanks so much Jayson. I've just tried to read your post without the voice. I can't do it! but it feels like I almost can. Very hard to see words without voicing them I've found a similar but easier thing in listening to music. Have you noticed how your mind plays the music you're hearing a split sencod after you hear it? The mental impression of the music I guess. It's easy enough to shut that down and just pay bare attention but it feels quite similar to your reading voice thing. I will ponder the fine points of your investigation when I meditate in the morning lol..

1

- · 19h

Ina Clapp

Jayson MPaul

Thank you for posting

1

Soh Wei Yu

Jayson MPaul

1

John Tan: That is great insight but not just thoughts, sound, smell..etc. what about colors, lights...vividly vision? Where is the lurid scenery right before the eyes now? Don't privileged mind over phenomena or phenomena over mind.

It does not only apply only to referent of conceptual constructs are not found, even non-dual presence is not found...taste this not found deeply...the -A...

Then look at DO....if mind is de-constructed, there is no mind and into anatta, and phenomena too are deconstructed....without privileging either mind or phenomena, move deeply into dependent designation/origination, taste the formation, deconstruction and see the freedom of natural and spontaneous perfection.

Post anatta, insight is not so much about the radiance of presence, that is a given, it is the +A and -A taste...

- · 12h

□

Soh Wei Yu

JT:
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../daniel-post-on...
Knowing is not enough...but taste the depth of how this "not found" becomes the wisdom that frees.

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
Daniel's Post on Anatta/Emptiness
Daniel's Post on Anatta/Emptiness ·

Remove Preview

- · 12h

□

Jayson MPaul
Author

Soh Wei Yu
Yes exactly. I have been doing the not found tastes a lot recently. How mind is not found, thoughts are not found, I've done the vivid scenery not found in the past as well. Appearance is, but in no location at all

□

- **Soh Wei Yu**

JT:

Not found is more tasty than full presence 🤣🤣🤣

If extended to all appearances, then the entire body mind will be pervaded by this single taste of "not found" -- immensely spacious and free, natural and spontaneous. He should spend some quality time on that.

Then relate this taste to essencelessness and understand the conceptual relationship and experiential taste of:

--Essencelessness and the 8 extremes.

--Essencelessness and dependent designations.

--Essencelessness and total exertion.

--Essencelessness and the manifold of appearances.

1 · 17m

Jayson MPaul

Author

Thanks! I will do that. Not found is more tasty than full presence 😁

1

- · 14m

Soh Wei Yu

JT:

Means see the essencelessness of what appears and refine the view of essencelessness according to the abv instead of relating through presence. Put presence aside🤣🤣🤣 · 12m

Soh Wei Yu

JT: you should focus on that instead of PCEs, it will help you relinquish fear, attachment and energy imbalances, radiance of presence will be soft and light, yet natural and immense. · 8m

Jayson MPaul

Author

Seems like this: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../putting-aside...

Putting aside Presence, Penetrate Deeply into Two Fold Emptiness · 8m

Soh Wei Yu

JT: Yes related

▫ Soh Wei Yu

10/21/2012 3:44 PM: John: You expressed well in Total exertion. That is actualizing and being less dogmatic
10/21/2012 3:50 PM: John: As of now, you should have no trace of innate clarity anymore...
10/21/2012 3:55 PM: John: After a while, you will forget everything about this innate clarity...like view being actualized and cast aside
10/21/2012 4:01 PM: John: Your practice entering the 3 states seem to progress well. All the six entries and exists must be beaming bright and energetic for you now..to penetrate the 3 states...
10/21/2012 4:02 PM: John: In addition your faith and merit must be there
10/21/2012 4:02 PM: John: Practice hard
....
[9:23 AM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: Now if luminosity is intrinsic and inherent in all cognitive states of our continuum, how can it be prasangika?
[9:25 AM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: This is the issue of mahamudra and dzogchen despite claiming that mmk is the definitive view.
(Soh: I think Mahamudra and Dzogchen also teaches the emptiness of Awareness, so this might be only referring to certain teachers, texts and writings I pasted to him)
Also important and relevant:

Wetness and Water

https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=40&t=28648&start=20

Malcolm:

The idea that things have natures is refuted by Nāgārjuna in the MMK, etc., Bhavaviveka, Candrakīrti, etc., in short by all Madhyamakas.

A "non-inherent nature" is a contradiction in terms.

The error of mundane, conventionally-valid perception is to believe that entities have natures, when in fact they do not, being phenomena that arise from conditions. It is quite easy to show a worldly person the contradiction in their thinking. Wetness and water are not two different things; therefore wetness is not the nature of water. Heat and fire are not two different things, therefore, heat is not the nature of fire, etc. For example, one can ask them, "Does wetness depend on water, or water on wetness?" If they claim wetness depends on water, ask them, where is there water that exists without wetness? If they claim the opposite, that water depends on wetness, ask them, where is there wetness that exists without water? If there is no wetness without water nor water without wetness, they can easily be shown that wetness is not a nature of water, but merely a name for the same entity under discussion. Thus, the assertion that wetness is the nature of water cannot survive analysis. The assertion of all other natures can be eliminated in the same way.

...

Then not only are you ignorant of the English language, but you are ignorant of Candrakīrti where, in the Prasannapāda, he states that the only nature is the natureless nature, emptiness.

Then, if it is asked what is this dharmatā of phenomena, it is the essence of phenomena. If it is ask what is an essence, it is a nature [or an inherent existence, rang bzhin]. If it is asked what is an inherent existence [or nature], it is emptiness. If it is asked what is emptiness, it is naturelessness [or absence of inherent existence]. If it is asked what is the absence of inherent existence [or naturelessness], it is suchness [tathāta]. If it is asked what is suchness, it is the essence of suchness that is unchanging and permanent, that is, because it is not fabricated it does not arise in all aspects and because it is not dependent, it is called the nature [or inherent existence] of fire, etc."

Labels: Ācārya Malcolm Smith, Emptiness, Madhyamaka |

□ Soh Wei Yu

[9:26 AM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: That [heat being a characteristic of fire] is precisely not prasangika and is rejected that heat is a characteristic of fire and wetness is a characteristic of water.

[9:27 AM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: In tsongkhapa difficult points, he rejected awareness.

□ □ ·

Reply

□ Soh Wei Yu

Anyway it's a good insight you're having. Adding this to post-anatta contemplation in AtR guide.

“There is popularized “vipaśyanā” or vipassana, which is a meditation style that co-opted the Pali term, and then real vipaśyanā.

The former is a meditation style that seems to be a glorified version of śamatha, although I don’t know the specifics of it. The latter, is a clear insight that cognizes the emptiness of phenomena, which is the true meaning of vipaśyanā. Defined as such in the *Akṣayamati-nirdeśa:*

The consciousness that perceives the entry into reality is called "vipaśyanā." So-called vipaśyanā is perceiving phenomena correctly, perceiving phenomena as they are, perceiving phenomena truly, and perceiving phenomena as not otherwise, perceiving phenomena as empty, without characteristics, without aspiration, perceiving phenomena to be unformed, likewise, nonarisen, unproduced, insubstantial, just as they are, pure, and as isolated. It is perceiving phenomena as unmoving, inactive, without self, wholly without grasping, inseparable, one taste, as the nature of space, and nirvana by nature.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

“The Trouble With Agency

Filed under Prose

Agency implies an agent. If there is no agent, there can be no agency. Agency, of course, is the action or intervention of a thing, or person, that produces an effect. To say that language can’t capture the truth is even more true when silly things are being stated. So when someone talks about causes and conditions, they are being silly because these are not the same. A cause is that which makes a thing happen. It implies an agent and agency–a veritable proliferation of sillinesses. A condition is that which opens the possibility of something happening. But conditions can never cause anything to happen because they are neither an agent nor have agency. Perhaps this surprises you. But think about all the things you thought were going to happen in your life that didn’t, and all the things that did that you never saw coming! Scientists call this stochastic behavior–it extends all the way down to the quantum level (and perhaps especially there!). It’s the reason why a computer needs a clock, that coordinates all the stochastic behavior of electronic components so that the device can actually accomplish the tasks it has been engineered to allow to happen. Notice I didn’t say “make happen,” because sometimes things don’t. And we’ve probably all experienced that too.

Often, in our attempts to make sense of reality, we fall into old habits of thought that arise from an understanding in our heads that things do things. Exorcising that understanding happens naturally when a certain point is reached, but without the direct experience, silliness abounds.

Parmenides, an Ancient Greek philosopher once wrote a poem about his insights into reality. He didn’t use any pronouns, and few, if any nouns. Smart people, thinking they knew what he meant, supplied a lot of additional wording that made the poem easier to read, but empty of truth. Then, once that was done, they realized that Parmenides hadn’t said the right thing in the right way, so they fixed that up too. When Parmenides said: “the same: to be and wherefore is intuitive awareness” (“ταὐτὸν δ’ ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὕνεκέν ἐστι νόημα”), equating the manifesting appearances and selfless knowing, they clarified it, equating “being” with “thinking,” turning it into a kind of “I think, therefore I am!” statement instead. Silliness. Neither the Greek word for thought, nor for thinking appears anywhere in Parmenides’ statement.

So, try to make sense of conditions, not as any kind of interaction between entities, not even in a metaphorical fashion. Instead, think of how a seed grows. The sun doesn’t cause the seed to grow, any more than rain does, or the soil, or all the bacteria, fungi, animals, and other plants do. Yet, for the seed to grow, all of those conditions need to be right, including the condition of the seed being present.

As to what causes the seed to grow, well, just let the idea of causes go. It involves agents and agency, and they are just silly nonsense. Understand that when the right conditions are present, the possibility of genesis is present, but what actually happens is uncaused.

Now divest that scenario of all sense of things inherent in it. Sunlight isn’t a thing, except as a concept. Neither is water, or soil, or all the life present in soil. These are all just ideas, ways to talk about reality in shorthand. Instead, see an amazing, and coherent presencing of selfless naturing. Don’t even hold onto the idea of a nature, as something doing the naturing. It will cause a cognitive dissonance that will tire you out, but the effort lays a groundwork for the direct experience to come. It’s all just more conditioning, and in this case, it’s called mind training, but it could be called mind conditioning as well, because you are not making anything happen, you are only developing the right conditions for certain experiences to happen.

So remember: there is no mind, instead there is just this awesome and beautiful selfless naturing. Or if you prefer, there is just this awesome and beautiful selfless minding. But no nature and no mind anywhere–just the appearance of awesome beauty.

Reflect on that phrase, “awesome beauty.” Another way of expressing it, that I use, is the visceral essence of selfless loving. But you can just call it bliss instead.” - James M. Corrigan

“Empty phenomena ~ Nagarjuna

All beings consist of causes and effects,
In which there is no ‘sentient being’ at all.
From phenomena which are exclusively empty,
There arise only empty phenomena.
All things are devoid of any ‘I’ or ‘mine’.

Like a recitation, a candle, a mirror, a seal,
A magnifying glass, a seed, sourness, or a sound,
So also with the continuation of the aggregates —
The wise should know they are not transferred.

Nagarjuna

The Heart of Dependent Origination, verse 4 & 5”

“Perfection of no-mind is not possible in my opinion without complete integration of the general principle of Dependent Origination, and very clear penetration of the problem of dualistic/inherent framework. That is even after very mature phase 5, no-mind is not necessarily perfected. One has to continue to refine the view.” - John Tan, 2013

“Post anatta insight, what is important is how is one to practice in the conventional world of relatives where traces of imprint are still intact.

How is one to exhaust the karmic imprints and what view will stop one from harbouring the inherent and dualistic tendencies.

"Seeing is only seen, no seer" helps in triggering experiential insight of anatta but it is not an appropriate view for the conditioned mind to function effectively and efficiently in a conventional world.

Embrace the view of dependent arising fully, a precious and perfect view for anatta practitioners.” - John Tan, 2019

However, there should be a balance.

“When you are luminous and transparent, don't think of dependent origination or emptiness, that is [the contemplative practice for] post-equipoise. When hearing sound, like the sound of flowing water and chirping bird, it is as if you are there. It should be non-conceptual, no sense of body or me, transparent, as if the sensations stand out. You must always have some quality time into this state of anatta. Means you cannot keep losing yourself in verbal thoughts, you got to have quality hours dedicated to relaxation and experience fully without self, without reservation." - John Tan, 2018

“The only truth is to see the emptiness of the conventional. Equipoise strictly speaking is free from all elaborations.

That is exactly the experiential insight and taste of anatta, in the seen just the seen, therefore no seer, no seeing, nothing seen.” – John Tan, 2020

“[12:18 PM, 7/7/2020] John Tan: The awakening for phases of insight is centred on two aspects really. The direct taste of clarity and the full blown freedom from the perceiver and perceived. This is mark by anatta where the insight into no-self is the key to the floodgate. It is THE key insight that lead to effortless and spontaneous non-dual expression that is free from perceiver and perceived.
[12:20 PM, 7/7/2020] John Tan: Emptiness goes further and so does total exertion. It penetrates deeply into the conventional world and see how powerful constructs affect the intellectual mind and the breadth and depth of freeing oneself from all these mental constructs.

[10:09 AM, 7/9/2020] John Tan: The problem is the thought. Thought after thought 念念.

This continuous stream of thoughts form a chain that is still under the deep influence of the dualistic and inherent paradigm that prevents the seeing.

So despite the training like your 人乘 teaching to lengthen the gap between thoughts, each arising thought is still under the influence and prevents the clear seeing. Therefore you need right view with certain training to slow down the thoughts to allow the clear seeing of what the view of anatta, DO is trying to convey. So that when each thought arises, it can with the help of the view, see the actuality of what is going on. So that it can authenticate the view, to realize in real time the "always and already is" of anatta.

Once it is authenticate, you are the view is no more needed, it is real time actualization and one realizes that the state of no mind that is free from a perceiver and perceived is always effortlessly manifesting.

Next step you can ask people if it is always so, how is it that we can still be in confusion?

This paradox or koan will trigger another insight to allow practitioner to clearly understand what liberates.

As I told you, whether in confusion or realization it is always in a state of no mind and no-self otherwise confusion is not possible as I explain to you about ignorance. So what exactly liberates? Kazz.. 🤣🤣🤣
[12:32 PM, 7/9/2020] John Tan: So can you see clearly why the paradox?”

“Light as a feather, immense as the universe

Just now I went for yoga and meditation session. Then after that I went out for a walk. (I really enjoy walks nowadays, very meditative) Then I feel very very peaceful.. the luminosity of anatta and total exertion is clear as usual (has become a completely effortless natural state) but not heavy.. instead there is a sensation of lightness like floating. Everything is appearing but not truly there, there is no grasping, like falling snow that melts even before landing.

Anyway I was reminded of a verse by the arahant Khitaka in the Theragatha:

“How light my body!
Touched by abundant
rapture & bliss,
—like a cotton tuft
borne on the breeze—
it seems to be floating
—my body!”

Post anatta (or even before actually), this advice by John Tan (Thusness) is important - “be light as a feather, immense as the universe”

Angelo wrote: "Beautiful. Also by JT: “You have to fully and completely replace the mind that wants to understand with the mind that wants to live!”

Thanks for post 🙏 "" - Soh, 2019

[insight] [buddhism] A reconsideration of the meaning of "Stream-Entry" considering the data points of both pragmatic Dharma and traditional Buddhism

Also see:
What is Nirvana?
Great Resource of Buddha's Teachings
The Deathless in Buddhadharma?
The Meaning of Nirvana

https://www.reddit.com/r/streamentry/comments/igored/insight_buddhism_a_reconsideration_of_the_meaning/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf%20

[9:07 PM, 8/27/2020] John Tan: Yes pretty much agree with what he said.
[9:40 PM, 8/27/2020] John Tan: But the same insight of anatta must be applied to object, characteristics, cause and effect, production and cessation...which is a more slippery issue. Nevertheless, experientially seeing through self/Self is still most crucial.

Soh: Highly recommend reading Geoff’s Measureless Mind PDF https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/09/great-resource-of-buddha-teachings.html, there are excerpts here: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com.au/2012/09/great-resource-of-buddha-teachings.html

On Impermanence, Empty Nature and Self-Liberation:

“While revisiting the posts by Archaya Mahayogi Shridhar Rana Rinpoche (many good articles by him https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../marshland-flowers...), found an excerpt where he distinguished Gaudapada from Buddhadharma:

https://www.byomakusuma.org/VedantaVisAVisShentong.html

Excerpt:

"Sankaràcàrya even mentions the exact opposite view of what Śāntarakṣita mentioned above and refutes him. In exact opposite of what Śāntarakṣita says, “The error in the view of these philosophers is a slight one – due only to the assertion of eternality of cognition.” Sankara says about the Chittamatra “The error in the view of these philosophies is only slight - they believe the non-dual mind as changing moment to moment; we believe it as unchanging eternal.”
If the meaning of the Uttara Tantra is what the Shentongpas make it out to be, it would have existed in the Indian sources too. Sankara would certainly have written that the view of these Buddhist philosophers as what the Vedas had always taught and that Buddhism is just a branch of Hinduism. Even today, if any Indian Hindu philosopher comes across the Shentong view, they would be most happy to embrace it as the correct view and take it as a solid proof that Buddhism is just a branch of Hinduism and the Buddha did not teach anything new. This of course blatantly contradicts what the Buddha himself said in Mahayana, Theravada, and Sarvàstivàda Sutras and Sàstra-s. The Buddha said that he taught something that had been lost for a long time. But the Vedas and the Vedic Bràhmins of the Buddha’s time, whom the Buddha met, had been and are still teaching the existence of true âtmà, and ‘eternal non-dual cognition’ as the Ultimate Reality.
If we glance through the Jain literature, we again find that no Jain scholar mentions that the Buddhists believed in an eternal / permanent non-dual cognition as the ultimate reality. At least, those Jain scholars after Asanga should have done so, if that was how the Uttara Tantra had been interpreted in India.

If we analyze both the Hindu Sankaràcàrya’s and the Buddhist Śāntarakṣita’s, we find that both agree that the view of the Hindu Advaita Vedànta is that the ultimate reality (âtmà) is an unchanging, eternal non-dual cognition. The Buddhists as a whole do not agree that the ultimate reality is an eternal, unchanging non-dual cognition, but rather a changing eternal non-dual cognition. These statements found in the 6th century Hindu text and the refutations of the Hindu view found in the 9th century Buddhist texts (both of which were after the Uttara Tantra and Asanga), show that the Hindu view of the ultimate reality as an unchanging, eternal non-dual cognition is non-existent amongst the Buddhists of India. Not only was such a view non-existent amongst Buddhists of India, but it was also refuted as a wrong view by scholars like Śāntarakṣita. He even writes that if and when Buddhists use the word ‘eternal’ (nitya), it means ‘parinàmi nitya’, i.e., changing eternal, and not the Hindu kind of eternal, which always remains unchanged. The Hindu âtmà is not only non-dual cognition but is also unchanging, eternal, and truly existing. Sankaràcàrya defines existence (sat) in his Tattvaboda as that which remains the same in all the 3 times (past, present, future). In the commentary by Gaudapàda (who was Sankaràcàrya’s Guru’s Guru), of the Màndukya Upanishada, in verse number 96, he calls the eternally really existing non-dual cognition is non-relational, i.e., free from reference points. In the 37th verse of the same work it is said that this non-dual, eternal, really existing cognition is free from all sense organs, i.e., free from the dualistic mind (namshe). So the Upanishadic view is that the really existing, eternal / permanent, non-dual, non-referential cognition is the âtmà, and this is not dualistic mind. This Upanishadic view existed even before the Buddha, and this was what Sankaràcàrya expounded very clearly and most powerfully around the 6th century. This view, similar to this Sankara view, was refuted by Śāntarakṣita as a wrong view.
The Vedàntic Sutras and Sàstra-s are full of statements like:

1. This âtmà is truly existent beyond existence and non-existence.
2. This is truly non-dual beyond dual and non-dual.
3. This âtmà is the Great Thing (mahàvastu), which is permanent beyond permanent and impermanent, etc., etc.
4. It is empty of all qualities (nirguna), which means empty of foreign qualities, but not empty (of itself), i.e., not empty of being a truly existing permanent entity (sat); not empty of being non-dual coginition (cit), and not empty of bliss (ànanda). Sat-cit-ànanda is the nature of this âtmà (or non-dual cognition).

If you have understood what I have written above, it is easy to understand why when Ringo Tulku presented the Shentong view in an Indian symposium, all the Hindu Indian scholars happily agreed with it and told him happily, “This is the same view as our Vedanta!.” Also, a few centuries ago, Jonangpa Kunga Drol Chog, a throne holder of the Jonangpa, had visited Muktinàth, where he presented his views to the Hindu yogis present there. These Hindu yogis also called him a genuine Hindu yogi after they heard his Shentong view."

Other than the 'multiplicity' which Greg Goode said was a distinction between Advaitic and Emptiness realization (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../greg-goode-on...), the 'permanence' 'unchanging' part is also another point that differs:

“Although Bhāviveka doesn’t struggle that much, he is quite clear:

“Since [the tīrthika position of] self, permanence, all pervasiveness and oneness contradict their opposite, [the Buddhist position of] no-self, impermanence, non-pervasiveness and multiplicity, they are completely different.” – Kyle Dixon, 2020

“Bhāviveka demonstrates the proper way to view buddhanature:

The statement "The tathāgata pervades" means wisdom pervades all objects of knowledge, but it does not mean abiding in everything like Viśnu. Further, "Tathāgatagarbhin" means emptiness, signlessness and absence of aspiration exist the continuums of all sentient beings, but is not an inner personal agent pervading everyone.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

This is also a point made by JT in Difference Between Thusness Stage 4 and 5 (Substantial Non-duality vs Anatta) https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../difference-between...

Also, the post above also demonstrates what John Tan said before (and years ago he made a similar comment about certain teachers mistaking freedom from extremes in a similar way):

"...sounded like instead of "freedom" from the 4 extremes of the tetralemma, there seem to be an establishment of a super Awareness that "transcends" the 4 extremes. Tetralemma has always been quite problematic🤣 that is why Tsongkhapa added qualifiers like "exist conventionally" and "not exist ultimately" to present the tetralemma in a more logical fashion whereas other schools simply see the purpose is to pacify the mind from all views, notions and concepts instead of finding "something" that can transcend or satisfy all the 4 conditions.

Anyway it will be seen as quite final by any practitioner that collapses both subject and object into pure seeing. Unless 缘 arises to relinquish both awareness and phenomena, whatever said will be quite futile for now."

Background of Archaya Mahayogi Shridhar Rana Rinpoche:

"A student of Archaya Mahayogi Shridhar Rinpoche informed me that Rinpoche has recently revised his article Madhyamika Buddhism Vis-a-vis Hindu Vedanta and uploaded one new article on Nyingma (a school of Tibetan Buddhism)'s view. Rinpoche also personally asked his student to inform me about their free online magazine, I thanked the guru and signed up. I also mentioned that I have dreamt of receiving teachings from him before, perhaps some karmic connection...

After the e-mail I did a little research and found a biography (Part 1: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-oveGtYYgU, Part 2: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9V_MV5aAyZg, http://www.byomakusuma.org/TheVidyadhara.html) of this great teacher Archaya Mahayogi Shridhar Rinpoche. He used to practice the Hindu tantras and Vedanta under a qualified Vedanta teacher for nine years intensely in the cemetaries, etc. Eventually he realized the Atman-Brahman, the ultimate goal of Hinduism, and his realization was confirmed by his Vedantic masters to be correct and profound.

However, still unsatisfied with his realization, he continued searching, first into Zen Buddhism, then later into the teachings of Vajrayana Buddhism, including the Vajrayana Tantras, Mahamudra and Dzogchen teachings, and

practiced them thoroughly until he attained realization and was asked to start teaching by his teachers. His main practise is of the Lamdre system of teachings in the Sakya school. Despite having practised the teachings thoroughly and attained realization, he continues to go into deep meditation retreats for over a decade to deepen his enlightenment/experience and was given the title 'Mahayogi' and 'Rinpoche' by H.E. Chobgay Trichen Rinpoche. He continues to be in practice retreats and share his knowledge with others at the same time.

As one of the few great Buddhist teachers in Nepal where the majority of the population belong to the Hindu faith, a place where myths and misconceptions of Buddhism are abound, he is in a great position to correct all of these misconceptions and do an accurate and unbiased comparison between the teachings of Buddhism vis-a-vis Hinduism due to his deep knowledge and experience of the Buddhist teachings as well as his previous experience with the Hindu tradition. He emphasizes that the comparison was done not in order to demean one system of teaching over another but to provide greater clarity on the essential doctrines of each system so that they could each be understood correctly, as he says, "I must reiterate that this difference in both the system is very important to fully understand both the systems properly and is not meant to demean either system."

Anyway, I looked further into their website and over the past few days I've read through all the articles of Marshland Flowers (from series 1 to 7) and highly recommend them - they deal with several subjects of dharma including anatman (non-self), emptiness, dependent origination, the four noble truths, Buddhism vis-a-vis Hinduism, rebirth, karmic propensities (samskaras), meditation, vipassana (insight meditation), shamatha (calm abiding meditation), siddhis/powers, the tenets of Sravakayana and Mahayana Buddhism, as well as Tantras, Buddhism and science, etc etc. All these articles are of great quality, well written and highly recommended. All in all, it provides a pretty complete overall understanding of the core/fundamental Buddhist teachings. I've added this blog entry to the 'Stickied Posts' section of this blog (see right hand corner)."" – Soh, 2020

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Aditya Prasad

Soh Wei Yu

I am not claiming that the antidote to eternalism is nihilism etc. I am saying that when one is stuck seeing the nature as multiplicity only (for example), the medicine is to notice how it instead appears as singular when the view is changed. This shows the emptiness of *both* views.

Consider Kyle's quote here:

“Since [the tīrthika position of] self, permanence, all pervasiveness and oneness contradict their opposite, [the Buddhist position of] no-self, impermanence, non-pervasiveness and multiplicity, they are completely different.” – Kyle Dixon, 2020

In my experience, the correct medicine is not to refute permanence in favor of impermanence etc. It is to see the emptiness of both.

□ Soh Wei Yu

Author

Aditya Prasad

If one collapses multiplicity into singularity, then it is one mind. That is a step below anatta.
After anatta, by contemplating on dependent designation/emptiness, multiplicity is luminous and empty, non-arisen and free from extremes, free from one or many.
But conventionally it would not be wrong to state that one taste (of empty clarity) is simply the multiplicity and diversity of appearances, there is no collapsing of everything into an undifferentiated oneness post-anatta.

□ Aditya Prasad

Soh Wei Yu

I am not claiming that the antidote to eternalism is nihilism etc. I am saying that when one is stuck seeing the nature as multiplicity only (for example), the medicine is to notice how it instead appears as singular when the view is changed. This helps one discover the emptiness of *both* views.
Consider Kyle's quote here:
“Since [the tīrthika position of] self, permanence, all pervasiveness and oneness contradict their opposite, [the Buddhist position of] no-self, impermanence, non-pervasiveness and multiplicity, they are completely different.” – Kyle Dixon, 2020
In my experience, the correct medicine is not to refute permanence *in favor of* impermanence etc. It is to see the emptiness of both.

□ Soh Wei Yu

Author

After anatta there is no unchanging awareness at all, just dynamic appearances (therefore impermanence is more accurate than permanence), but even dynamic appearances are never found, never arose, empty and non-arisen, like reflections.

□ Soh Wei Yu

Author

Since no phenomena are found to arise, abide, and cease, merely dependently originating -- no dharmas are established to either be permanent or impermanent. That is the emptiness of all dharmas.

▫ Aditya Prasad

Soh Wei Yu

I am not talking about collapsing the many into one.
"therefore impermanence is more accurate than permanence"
I am claiming that neither one is "more accurate" in any intrinsic or ultimate sense. "Impermanence" is only "accurate" in the sense that it releases a particular kind of grasping that sentient beings have (that of permanence). For those who are clinging to impermanence, more insistence on impermanence will not be helpful, and in that sense will not be "more accurate."

▫ Soh Wei Yu

Author

In anatta, impermanence is directly authenticated as simply the dynamic and traceless nature of appearances. It is not about having a conceptual view of impermanence, it is about the direct authentication of 'in hearing only sound, no hearer', 'in seeing only scenery, no seer', 'in thinking only thoughts, no thinker'. Everything is gapless and direct and luminous. Yet there is no staying, totally dynamic and traceless like drawing on water. Of course, you're right that there can be a subtle view remaining of dharmas having subtle existences arising and ceasing in flickering speed. That too must be seen through, then one realises and tastes the non-arisen nature of dharmas.

▫ Aditya Prasad

Soh Wei Yu

Yes. There is a direct authentication that there never was a permanent anything (either perceived or perceiver) and therefore the term "impermanence" seems to be "more accurate" for the time being. And then it is seen that even this term can subtly imply temporariness in time. When time is utterly transcended, neither term can apply. Same with all other pairs of terms. That is the problem I have with Kyle's assertion that Buddhism rejects permanence in favor of impermanence etc. It actually transcends all such dualities. I know he knows better, but the language can be misleading.

▫ Soh Wei Yu

Author

Kyle's post is correct if understood in context.
Of course, Kyle also wrote in 2015,
"Phenomena appear to arise and cease from the standpoint of ignorance [avidyā], however, once we awaken to recognize the nature [dharmatā] of phenomena [dharmas], their emptiness, we realize that they are non-arisen [anutpāda], and are like illusions.
Nāgārjuna is saying when you are not in recognition of the dharmatā of phenomena, you are deluded and they appear to be impermanent entities. Once you awaken, you no longer perceive impermanence, because you no longer perceive conditioned entities."

□ Soh Wei Yu

Author
- https://www.reddit.com/.../comments/guzwve/impermanence/
□ Soh Wei Yu

Author
I do not think that Bhavaviveka, who is a master of Madhyamika, would not be aware of this. He is pointing out that Buddhists teach the non-abiding nature of consciousness in contrast to the non-Buddhist view about an unchanging or permanent consciousness. He is not trying to establish the ultimacy of arising/abiding/subsiding momentary dharmas like certain 'Hinayana schools'.
□ □ ·
Reply
□ · 13m

o 06 Nov `10, 9:30AM

Originally posted by simpo_:

Yah...

Non-duality is more obvious when it is experienced.

No-self is a more subtle insight. There is a subtle 'switch'. It is this subtle switch that allows for the arising and passing away as the 'self' is not blocking the arising from passing away.

I hope i am getting it right... :) Hope for Thusness' input and advise.

John Tan/Thusness replied:

Yes Simpo [Sim Pern Chong],

That is what I understand too. There are subtle differences between Advaita non-duality and buddhist's anatta both in terms of realization and experience.

When contemplating on the subject of 'no-self', the mind of the practitioner is directed towards the transient phenomena and upon the ripening of conditions, the mind suddenly sees the illusionary division of subject-object duality; with the maturing of this realization, experience becomes seamlessly whole. There is no hearer in hearing or perceiver in perceiving, just simply a sense of perception. In terms of this experience, they are similar.

However although the blinding bond of 'duality' is dissolved, the tendency to see things 'inherently' isn't. The practitioners continue to resort back to a Self despite after the clear seeing of this truth and rest their understanding of 'no-self based on Self'. This is substantialist non-duality. There is an ultimate essence and abiding in Self is still the way towards liberation and there is also the temptation to treat this experience as a sort of pseudo finality.

Buddhism on the other hand sees this experience and realization as the first step in the 8 fold path -- right view. It means right view of anatta is fully authenticated with this non-dual experience but Buddhist’s non-dual is non-abiding, groundless and essence-less. There is no resorting back to an ultimate essence and the entire idea of liberation is based on seeing clearly the anatta, non-substantiality, essence-less empty nature of whatever arises, including Awareness or Self. Experience is luminously non-dual yet empty.

Therefore in Buddhism, besides the experience, right view is very important. Upon the clearing seeing of ‘no division’, it is advisable to penetrate further into the impermanent nature of phenomena both at the micro and macro level of experience. In terms of practice, there is no letting go to an ultimate ground or great void but the letting go is due to the thorough insight of the ‘empty nature’ of all arising -- Reality is perpetually ‘letting go’.

So in addition to the non-dual seamless experience, there must also be the clear experience of perpetual letting go of non-holding to whatever arises. Therefore when AEN told me non-dual presence, the NDNCDIMOP or being lock up permanently in PCEs of the AF as the key solution to eliminate emotion, pride and anger...the 10 fetters, I told him not yet, not because I am stubbornly attached to Buddha's teaching but because that is my realization and experience. :-)

The journey towards 'no-self' is analogous to peeling an onion. Practitioner goes through the process of peeling from dissolving of personality and identity to non-conceptuality to non-duality to realization of the lack of ownership to clear seeing of 'no agent behind transient phenomena to the empty nature of whatever arises. As we peel, the 'willingness' to let go certain aspects of 'self'/Self' grow and with more 'willingness' to let go, we come closer to seeing the true face of freedom.

Deeper clinging to a Self is not washed away with the non-dual insight. There must be further integration of the ‘non-dual’ experience into this arising and passing away, this impermanent nature, to dissolve the illusionary sense of self, anger, emotion, pride even the non-dual presence that we treasure so much; let whatever arises goes, be it during the waking, dreaming or deep sleep state. There will then come a time where a practitioner realizes the same ‘taste’ of the 3 states as there is no holding of the non-dual presence and all experiences turn natural, effortless and self-liberating.

Just my 2 cents. :)

Edited by Thusness 06 Nov `10, 3:09PM

Also see: Self-Liberation through Seeing with Naked Awareness in English & Chinese

quote:

Originally posted by longchen:
This is really good. Sure spell out the different subtle attachments.
It also in a way explain why there can so many different types of mystical or transcendental experiences.
All are but the various types of subtle attachments giving rise to different understandings and experiences.

Thanks so much. It is helpful for me

John Tan/Thusness:

Hi Longchen [Sim Pern Chong],

Not only that. This work by Padmasambhava is truly deep and profound; it discloses the self-liberating aspect of our intrinsic nature. It is especially important for you now.

At that time when you posted the thread of **non-dual and karmic pattern**, http://buddhism.sgforums.com/?action=thread_display&thread_id=225462, the condition is only right for understanding **'the strength of karmic propensities'**, as such, this aspect was not disclosed. Instead, the second door of impermanence was introduced and it was introduced with the purpose to complement the no-self experience you had in order to give rise to this insight of “Self-Liberation”
. The sole purpose of the practice of the second door of impermanence is for this insight to arise.

I was reading some commentaries about this work, I was disappointed; and with all due respect, I must say it is terribly distorted. The commentator has transformed this great work of Padmasambhava to an Advaita or neo-Advaita teaching. Self Liberating nature of our pristine nature is not to posit naked-awareness as a background where “all thoughts arise and subside’ and the background is not affected by this transient nature of thoughts, it remains constant, changeless and unmoved. ‘Self liberation’ should never be taken to mean this.

There is no Awareness apart from the arising and ceasing of thoughts and yet thought spontaneously arise and subsides in its own accord (self-liberating). It liberates at that very moment of ‘passing away’ (the practice of second door) without the need of effort, simply so. From moment to moment it is so. Thus comes and thus goes. This is its emptiness nature. The emptiness nature liberates instantaneously. By simply so, it is spontaneously self-perfected.

Sentient mind however posit a ‘self’ and holds. Whether the “thought” is good or bad, it attempts to do something to change, whatever direction it goes either good or bad, all is ‘doing’ (karma) and prevents the liberating nature. However without the experience of no-self (Buddhism non-duality not Adviata non-dual), one can never understand this intuitively.

Do read with a reverent heart. Homage to Padmasambhava.

quote:

How can you say that you cannot find your own mind?

The mind is just that which is thinking:
(My opinion is it should be translated to “The mind is just the thinking” but I do not have the original text.)

And yet, although you have searched (for the thinker), how can you say that you do not find him?

With respect to this, nowhere does there exist the one who is the cause of (mental) activity.

And yet, since activity exists, how can you say that such activity does not arise?

Since merely allowing (thoughts) to settle into their own condition, without trying to modify them in any way, is sufficient,

How can you say that you are not able to remain in a calm state?

Since allowing (thoughts) to be just as they are, with out trying to do anything about them, is sufficient,

How can you say that you are not able to do anything with regard to them?

Since clarity, awareness, and emptiness are inseparable and are spontaneously self-perfected,

How can you say that nothing is accomplished by your practice?

Since (intrinsic awareness) is self-originated and spontaneously self-perfected without any antecedent causes or conditions,

How can you say that you are not able to accomplish anything by your efforts?

Since the arising of discursive thoughts and their being liberated occur simultaneously,

How can you say that you are unable to apply an antidote?

Since your own immediate awareness is just this,

How can you say that you do not know anything with regard to it?

And

quote:

It is certain that all of the diverse characteristics of things are liberated into their own condition,

Like clouds in the atmosphere that are self-originated and self-liberated.

You should look at your own mind to see whether it is like that or not.

“(12:25 AM) Thusness: No Self as non-dual eliminates the witnessing background leading to the dissolution of subject-object split whereas the practice of second door of impermanence eliminates the self from karmic momentum leading to non-attachment and fearlessness.
(12:25 AM) Thusness: The first part is experienced while the 2nd part isn't.
(12:25 AM) AEN: icic..
(12:26 AM) AEN: how come impermanence leads to eliminating self from karmic momentum?
(12:26 AM) Thusness: impermanence is?
(12:27 AM) AEN: change? lol
(12:27 AM) AEN: self liberating?
(12:29 AM) Thusness: kok ur head
(12:29 AM) Thusness: what is the difference between impermanence and letting go?
(12:32 AM) AEN: back
(12:32 AM) AEN: hmm i mean bcos of impermanence that the karmic momentum 'let goes' itself?
(12:33 AM) Thusness: no
(12:34 AM) AEN: hmm dunno hehehe
(12:34 AM) Thusness: lol
(12:34 AM) Thusness: impermanence is characteristic of reality
(12:35 AM) Thusness: it flows in its own accord
(12:35 AM) AEN: icic
(12:35 AM) Thusness: nothing needs be done
(12:35 AM) Thusness: whereas letting go is really a form of holding

(12:36 AM) Thusness: the second door is to developed to experience this insight and experience the passing away on its own accord
(12:37 AM) Thusness: there is nothing to hold or release
(12:37 AM) AEN: icic..
(12:37 AM) Thusness: it is practice to see and experience this reality
(12:38 AM) Thusness: what are karmic propensities?
(12:38 AM) Thusness: how is it sustained?
(12:40 AM) AEN: hmm
(12:40 AM) AEN: icic
(12:41 AM) AEN: "it flows in its own accord" "nothing needs be done" isnt this self liberation?
(12:41 AM) AEN: what i meant was this..
(12:41 AM) AEN: From a pure insight practice point of view, you can’t ever fundamentally “let go” of anything, so I sometimes wish the popularity of this misleading and indifference-producing admonition would decline, or at least be properly explained. However, if you simply investigate the truth of the Three Characteristics of the sensations that seemed to be a solid thing, you will come to the wondrous realization that reality is continually “letting go” of itself! Thus, “let it go” at its best actually means, “don’t give a bunch of transient sensations an excessive sense of solidity.” It does not mean, “stop feeling or caring,” nor does it mean, “pretend that the noise in your mind is not there.”

~ Dharma Dan
(12:43 AM) Thusness: why is there liberation?
(12:43 AM) Thusness: reality always flow
(12:44 AM) Thusness: how come there is still suffering if everything self-liberates?
(12:49 AM) AEN: hmm
(12:49 AM) AEN: suffering?
(12:49 AM) AEN: bcos of grasping?
(12:49 AM) AEN: illusion of duality?
(12:49 AM) Thusness: so what is self?
(12:49 AM) AEN: illusion of duality?
(12:50 AM) Thusness: it is a manifestation of holding
(12:50 AM) Thusness: it is a manifestation of attachment
(12:50 AM) Thusness: therefore self can only exist if there is holding
(12:51 AM) Thusness: if and only if there is attachment” – Conversation with John Tan, 2007

“(12:17 AM) Thusness: what has that got to do with self liberation?
(12:17 AM) AEN: it does not require disassociating, just experiencing everything as it is without dualistic and inherent view?
(12:18 AM) Thusness: are you able to do that?
(12:18 AM) AEN: no
(12:18 AM) Thusness: why?
(12:18 AM) AEN: bcos i still have dualistic and inherent views
(12:18 AM) Thusness: yes. therefore you must know that because we see with such views, without such views, that is liberation. that is why right view is important. if 'dualistic and inherent' view is dissolved from the deepest depth of our consciousness, that already is liberation. therefore practice is to meet conditions and see whether inherent and dualistic

view arise. if it arises, then how could there be no suffering. therefore ignorance is the cause of suffering. it is the wrong view that shapes the experience. that experience with the wrong view is what that causes psychological and spiritual pain

(12:22 AM) AEN: oic..

(12:22 AM) Thusness: any moment you have that experience it is always so, so practice is dynamic to see such tendencies arise. because a practitioner mature his non-dual and anatta experience, his practice is dynamic as he realizes that all arising already so and always is so -- luminous and empty but we mistaken it as dualistic and inherent. it is the deeply rooted wrong view that shape and distort experience that causes all problems

get it?

(12:25 AM) AEN: oic..

(12:25 AM) Thusness: it is not negative feelings is already liberated...all sort of nonsense. did i teach you that like what Mr. J said? ignorance of seeing separation and inherent existence causes all these problems and negative feelings arise because of that

(12:26 AM) AEN: icic..

(12:31 AM) Thusness: so at that moment when you see that it is non-dual and empty, it liberates. if you do not experience that at the moment, how can you be liberated. when you try to get rid of the anger, you can't...either you are split or there is something inherent in you. so when you see the 'nature and essence' of any arising be it negative emotions or whatever as empty and luminous, it liberates. you see it with your entire body/mind/soul therefore it liberates. if you didn’t see it, no. get it? you must see the nature and essence of all arising as so.

(12:37 AM) AEN: oic..

(12:39 AM) Thusness: therefore when Mr. J said, negative emotion is liberation, he is having inherent view. Because he sees awareness as the substance and think that since it is it, it is liberation and yet feeling pain. so that is confusion due to desync of view and experience with no clarity of insight, not knowing what causes the pain. so understand ignorance. understand how inherent and dualistic view causes the problem

(12:43 AM) AEN: icic.. you mean there is no pain when one experience self liberation?

(12:44 AM) Thusness: of course there is pain if there is pain. it is the all of what the sensations are

(12:44 AM) AEN: what you mean

(12:45 AM) Thusness: you mean when you taste sour you don't know that it is sour?

(12:45 AM) AEN: i know

(12:45 AM) Thusness: then when there is those sensations that arise due to the conditions, you deny those sensations? whatever that you have dissolved, it isn't there. whatever conditions that contribute to the arising, has to arise

(12:47 AM) AEN: oic.. but you said negative emotion is liberation is wrong view?

(12:48 AM) Thusness: I am going to address your whole post. But, please tell me this. How can you write these words, and then turn around and say there is no Awareness. This confuses me.

Thanx,

S9

(12:48 AM) AEN: ya i saw that post :P

(12:48 AM) Thusness: all your nonsense he is going to answer
pengz
(12:50 AM) Thusness: only when you resolve that this pristine awareness is luminous yet empty, that is liberation
(12:50 AM) AEN: btw i was trying to tell him that awareness has no identity whether objective or subjective
(12:50 AM) Thusness: not seeing pristine awareness as inherent and dual” – Conversation with John Tan, early 2010

“Consciousness is Momentary

Malcolm posted:

https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=39&t=36543

Life, personhood, pleasure and pain
— This is all that's bound together
In a single mental event
— A moment that quickly takes place.

Even the spirits who endure
For eighty-four thousand aeons
— Even these do not live the same
For any two moments of mind.

What ceases for one who is dead,
Or for one who's still standing here,
Are all just the same aggregates
— Gone, never to connect again.

The states which are vanishing now,
And those which will vanish some day,
Have characteristics no different
Than those which have vanished before.

With no production there's no birth;
With becoming present, one lives.
When grasped with the highest meaning,
The world is dead when the mind stops.

There's no hoarding what has vanished,
No piling up for the future;
Those who have been born are standing
Like a seed upon a needle.

The vanishing of all these states
That have become is not welcome,
Though dissolving phenomena stand
Uncombined from primordial time.

From the unseen, [states] come and go,
Glimpsed only as they're passing by;
Like lightning flashing in the sky
— They arise and then pass away.

https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitak ... .olen.html

....

Also, the Buddha was quite clear that phenomena, including minds, were momentary. The Buddha may not have elaborated in detail upon what a "moment" was, but in the end, the basic unit of time in Buddhism is number of moments it takes to form a thought. In reality, moments are partless. Partless moments that perish as soon as they arise have no observable duration and are immune from Madhyamaka critique.

The notion that the mind is permanent (i.e. not momentary) is just a Hindu idea, Vedantic.” – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2021

~ *Samadhi, Breathing and Meditation Practice*

Also see chapters **Mindfulness of Breathing (Anapanasati)** and **Vipassana, John Tan’s Style** chapter in this guide. The article by One Thought Traveler in **Mindfulness of Breathing (Anapanasati)** expresses anatta and matures it into total exertion. It is good to be somatic and learn a technique to help regulate one’s energy to prevent energy imbalances, such as Vase Breathing (scroll towards the end of the chapter on **Tips on Energy Imbalances**). I would say Anapanasati is even more important than Vipassana after anatta, not because vipassana is less important but rather vipassana has become a natural and effortless ongoing state after anatta, however one still needs to practice Anapanasati/Vase Breathing for developing the other qualities like calmness, as well as the other seven factors of enlightenment, and regulate one’s energies. At some point, one will feel that the seven factors of enlightenment becomes very strong. One feels a strong sense of tranquil presence not only in sitting, but even in every step walking forward. This is a sign that one’s practice is maturing.

"There are 3 parts: no self, the karmic memory patterning, the luminous presence

Are you able to sense them...

If you were listening to a familiar song, you don't have memory of it?

Are you mindful of that, there is a luminous radiance presence and there is the content... inseparable but can be felt at the same time. Like when I drink honey water...there is the fluid and there is the taste of honey.

That is why you have to practice. One is without the meditator, with luminous radiance presence mixed with subtle content, the other is luminous radiance presence...

Post anatta, attention can just be focused on the radiance presence alone free of content...completely bare... But don't practice at night..." – John Tan, 2020

“You must also practice sitting meditation and have quality time in anatta free from apprender and apprehended, experience whatever sensations as insubstantial and light, natural and luminous. Keep opening as if inner radiance turns outer, convex turns concave.”

“Both (insight and sitting meditation) are equally important.”

“Yeah. 当下无心 (Soh: No Mind in this very instant)， very direct and very easy. When mind thinks and meddle with conventional, that is different. However after sometimes, when radiance and luminosity takes over, everything becomes radiance and energy.

Spend quality time in sitting until your radiance and calm abiding is integrated. Important.”

“In terms of radiance and purity, very fine, clean, immaculate, pellucid and crystal.. Free floating and insubstantial but there is no thoughts, concepts. Just pure radiance...this must be a very very quality, natural and calm and peace without any sense of apprehender and apprehended. That is why you have to spend some quality time in it. Then you will understand your to penetrate 3 states and what to do automatically.”

[11:59 AM, 8/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: “17 Radiant Presence is intrinsically unresolvable, While interpretations depend on resolution; The practice of Yoga is to notice That the actual felt experience of anything Is more and other than the limited identity It is held to be in interpretation. _____ In effect, it is as if there are two different dimensions present in experience; the dimension of direct experience of Radiant Presence as it is, and the dimension of interpretations. Ordinarily these dimensions are confused and held to be one. The yogi, having developed the ability to distinguish between these dimensions, is capable of focussing the attention on the dimension of uninterpreted Radiance alone relatively untainted by interpretation, even as interpretation may be present in experience. They then experience this Presence with sensitivity and intelligence, discovering that this actuality of naked Radiance is in its characteristics explicitly, utterly beyond the narrow oversimplified versions of it that the interpretations imply. This experiential engagement that constitutes the practice of Yoga, is in fact the fully felt experiential Presence of the totality of being that is always present as your experience, the field of the totality of Radiant Presence. This experiential engagement is both the path and the goal of Yoga.” – The Yoga of Radiant Presence by Peter Brown

[12:05 PM, 8/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Reminds me what you said presence with or without content
[1:13 PM, 8/16/2020] John Tan: Yes good that he can discern correctly and does not leave out this part.”

“[12:33 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Yes that is why they are so worried about mental cognition...haha.

That is why I tell you to focus on that aspect of presence...
[12:34 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: what do you mean worried about mental cognition
[12:34 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oh you mean difference between sem and rigpa?
[12:34 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Yes
[12:34 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[12:35 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: You see they have given rigpa a cryptic name. Free from all conceptual and mental factors.
[12:42 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: This pristine, clean, transparent quality is always there, otherwise there is no cognition nor manifestation. When there is no conceptual thoughts, it is obvious...when covered with mental thoughts, it is not that obvious but all manifestations are pervaded with this taste...
[12:43 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[12:43 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: It is be quite obvious to you...
[12:43 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: yeah
[12:44 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: In fact, it should already pervade your entire body mind.
[12:44 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Otherwise you wouldnt understand and feel like a ball of radiance light...
[12:46 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Whether hearing sound, seeing colors, tasting or feeling sensations, this luminous radiance is always there as presence.
[12:47 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Like now you are hearing sound, there is that quality...
[12:48 AM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah..
[12:49 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: In anatta, since all 6 senses become transparent and pure, entire body-mind becomes transparent and pristine...
[12:57 AM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: So one should not separate this transparent, pristine quality as if it is something separate from manifestation. The radiance is naturally pristine and crystal, no polishing needed. Nor can one distance from it.”

"Nice explanation. Meido Moore, who is a Rinzai Zen master says the same, he writes:
'From a practice standpoint, the crucial point is contained in the words, "one should just constantly activate correct views in one’s own mind." This has nothing to do with theoretical certainty that defilements are empty and do not bind; it refers to the seamless, sustained upwelling of the unity of samadhi/prajna. Departing from but then returning to this, again and again, describes the post-awakening practice to dissolve jikke.
If one experiences departure from this samadhi, even for a moment, the path is not completed at all. If one does not know what is actually meant by that samadhi, then even with kensho the path is still barely begun in terms of actualization.'
This process, dovetailing the “sudden” and “gradual” is identical for Dzogchen and Mahāmudrā as well." - Kyle Dixon, 2021

Kyle Dixon told me Zen teacher Meido Moore Roshi is very clear about the view based on a teaching he attended.
Also, Kyle:
Meido Moore Roshi, who has posted here in the past is very clear on the view, and though I’m not clairvoyant, and he is very modest, his presentation and understanding of the path are indicative of someone with some degree of genuine insight or realization.

Certainly a reliable resource as far as Zen goes.

- read more at https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/12/meido-moore.html

“The Rinzai Zen path for one is extremely well defined. Try the writings of Shido Bunan, Hakuin, Torei, etc. to start. Crucial details to actualize the path are not found in popular books, however, and are largely clarified through oral instruction.

...

I read it rather to say that common cultivation of external practices must always fall short lacking seeing the nature, so it seems I agree with Krodha's take.

From a practice standpoint, though, the crucial point is contained in the words, "one should just constantly activate correct views in one’s own mind." This has nothing to do with theoretical certainty that defilements are empty and do not bind; it refers to the seamless, sustained upwelling of the unified samadhi/prajna. Departing from but then returning to this, again and again, describes the post-awakening practice to dissolve jikke.

If one experiences departure from this samadhi, even for a moment, the path is not completed at all. If one does not know what is actually meant by that samadhi, then even with kensho the path is still barely begun in terms of actualization.

...

The masters I mentioned all say explicitly what the path consists of. Torei in particular lays it out from beginning to end, including foundations, common pitfalls, dangers of stopping half-way or fixating upon a partial realization, etc...so much so that his most famous text has long been used as a standard guide for trainees. Anyone studying Hakuin's *Keiso Dokuzui* would have the same map, which tallies of course with everything Shido Bunan wrote earlier. It is all extremely clear upon reading, though reading and grasping the layout of the path naturally is not at all equivalent to the process of walking the ground.

...

It is clearly delineated how this is conceived to happen, but details of how to actualize what is discussed and what is in fact signified by specific experiences that are mentioned to which the reader has not yet attained are of course uncovered over time, with experiential transformation, and in communication with the teacher who can display the embodied result and confirm the significant points. These writings are general maps useful to avoid getting lost, but one's actual guide on the ground gives the practical instructions that fit the often varying conditions. None of these writings are - or could be - sufficient for anyone to walk the path alone without a teacher's guidance, except possibly in the case of a person of extremely deep roots and unusual capacity. But since such persons are so exceedingly rare as to not be worth talking about, we general don't.

...

Zen considers the paramitas to be wholly fulfilled within the path of recognizing one's nature and then, taking that as the foundation of subsequent practice, dissolving habitual delusion along the path of embodying seamless realization. At the moment one genuinely recognizes one's nature, the essential point of all practices and paths is known with certainty, and a great confidence arises. Who cares about gradual vs. sudden at that point?

...

There are many so-called samadhis describing various aspects of the function of wisdom and gates such as the senses (e.g. samadhi of hearing, as pointed to in Hekiganroku 46), the elements (e.g. fire samadhi), the secret three-year practice of jewel mirror samadhi and alternating samadhi of hen/sho realized in penetration of the five ranks along the Rinzai path, etc. But in Zen practice these are all reducible to the one essential point, which is the fulfillment of vipashyana and shamatha in non-departure from the seamless upwelling of what is recognized in kensho.

If we have this recognition of our nature, confirmed by a genuine teacher, then we have entered the gate of Zen practice. If we are on the path of clarifying and embodying it, taking a heroic aspiration of the four vows as motivation, then we are actually walking that path. Everything else is really just distraction, including over-reliance on written guides intended to supplement, rather than serve as surrogates for, intimate instruction from the teacher.” – Zen Master Meido Moore https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?t=29188

Rinzai Zen at Korinji: Why Do We Sit in Meditation Posture?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_7Esh_Tn0w

[12:51 pm, 26/12/2021] John Tan: Meido Moore Teaching is excellent! Just don't look at it from the eye of "freedom from all elaborations". Go watch.
[12:54 pm, 26/12/2021] John Tan: An excerpt of Meido Moore Roshi’s teaching was shared in Yin Ling's story. I managed to find the whole teaching in YouTube.

In this short video, Meido Moore Roshi explains how the body posture, energy winds and the totality of the situation can manifest effortlessly into "total exertion" with clarity and real-time experiential insights. He also distinguishes "I am witnessing, oneness" from anatta and "total exertion".

It is truly insightful and great explanations from start to end, an invaluable gem! Excellent and great teacher!
Soh: Wow.. nice
Where is it ah
I cant find in yin ling profile
[1:20 pm, 26/12/2021] John Tan: In my fb
[1:20 pm, 26/12/2021] John Tan: It is in her story

....

Kyle Dixon: Yeah Meido is really clear I enjoy his teachings

“The way is originally perfect and all-pervading. How could it be contingent on practice and realization? The true vehicle is self-sufficient. What need is there for special effort? Indeed, the whole body is free from dust. Who could believe in a means to brush it clean? It is never apart from this very place; what is the use of traveling around to practice? And yet, if there is a hairsbreadth deviation, it is like the gap between heaven and earth. If the least like or dislike arises, the mind is lost in confusion. Suppose you are confident in your understanding and rich in enlightenment, gaining the wisdom that knows at a glance, attaining the Way and clarifying the mind, arousing an aspiration to reach for the heavens. You are playing in the entranceway, but you are still short of the vital path of emancipation.

Consider the Buddha: although he was wise at birth, the traces of his six years of upright sitting can yet be seen. As for Bodhidharma, although he had received the mind-seal, his nine years of facing a wall is celebrated still. If even the ancient sages were like this, how can we today dispense with wholehearted practice?” – Zen Master Dogen, Founder of Soto Zen in Japan. See full text: Fukan Zazengi (Universally Recommended Instructions for Zazen)

[9:31 AM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: Mahamudra, zen, Dzogchen....direct pointing is to directly authenticate this unconditioned that is unmade.

[9:42 AM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: Unconditioned means unmade...

All Around, All At Once: Unfabricated

Sent this to William Gaucher, who went through the earlier thusness stages and realised anatta recently and contacted me via the blog, after a discussion about fabrication and luminosity.

John tan said the following article is very good.

All Around, All at Once: Part 3: “Unfabricated”

Presented by Ven. Jinmyo Renge Osho-ajari

Dainen-ji, November 17, 2017

Each moment unfolds as a display of richness, of colours and forms and sounds, as a myriad of sensations. Sincere practice is allowing the whole bodymind to live as the brightness of seeing, the depth of sound, as ever-changing sensations, as the Luminosity of experiencing as a whole. And when we allow ourselves to do even a measure of this, there is a quality of questioning, of interest, of intimacy with everything that is being experienced. But to do this requires that we choose to stop following the congealing of attention into fabrications that lead to further contraction and inevitably, suffering.

Anzan Hoshin roshi says, in the series of classes on “The 8000 Line Prajnaparamita sutra”:

Fear is the underlying mechanism of self-image, the attempt to reify reality in the most basic kind of way by simply freezing it and contracting. And the conventions of consensual experience or the experience of those who are unlearned, those who have not studied their experience, those who have not heard the Dharma, who have not practiced it, those whose lives are based on the understanding of a culture which is itself founded on contraction, will allow themselves to fall into that fear and will allow themselves to be held back by that fear from their own freedom.

What this points to is that we must wordlessly examine absolutely everything, taking nothing for granted: not who we think we are, not our memories, not what we think the body is, not what we think the mind is, not what our tendencies and habits tell us to do, not what our anger or fear is telling us to do. Any state you experience, any stance, any structure of attention you experience is not necessary. They are all recoil. They are all self-inflicted damage.

As the Roshi explained in Class 4 of the series “The Development of Buddhist Psychology:

All conditioned existence gives rise to dukkha or unsatisfactoriness, suffering, contraction, confusion; that this suffering, this dukkha, is fueled by the mechanism of grasping, of trying to hold on to something when it cannot be held and by continually misunderstanding the nature of our experience.

“Dukkha” does not describe one particular kind of state and the "suffering" isn’t necessarily traumatic or dramatic. I mention this because sometimes students will describe a particular kind of state, such as boredom, as dukkha. For example, a student might describe a state of sinking mind, of disinterest, when what they really mean is boredom, and boredom is the result of stupidity klesa. In other words, boredom is a way of experiencing that is poisoned by a hieing of attention that you are fabricating, following, propagating. It is a kind of pouting that one is not being entertained. It is not as dramatic as the tantrums of anger or grasping. But it is still a childish tactic.

But dukkha refers to all states which are the result of conditioned experience, and all states create suffering, unsatisfactoriness and bondage.

The roots of the Pali word "dukkha" are "jur" and "kha." "Bad" and "space". The root metaphor behind this is the hole in a wheel through which the axle passes being blocked. So the word means obstructed space.

We need to learn that the space of who we are, which is present as seeing and hearing and just the fact of experience is already open. When you are in a state, you think you have no choice about that, but the truth of the matter is that you are not choosing. You are following compulsion. Choose to actually practise and open attention and the axle will turn freely.

It’s easy to cultivate states when you are sitting - states of boredom, states of calm, states of quiet, states of euphoria, shiny, shiny states. But all of these are dead ends because whatever is experienced within the state can only be the product of the state. The context is narrowed to the kind of content that suits it. And this is why such states can seem so convincing, and so compelling. This is why you fixate on them. There is no one who is better at lying to you than you are, and the thing that’s convinced by the lie is the same thing that’s doing the lying. It’s not magic once you understand how the trick works. The states define who and what is imagined as a self but is really just a process of obstruction and fabrication.

In Zen practice, however, what we are doing is attending openly, rather than fixating. You can’t ‘fix’ a state from inside of a state. You have to open around it and release it first. Anything you experience when attention is arranged in

a structure (a state) is going to be biased and therefore cannot be true. Seeing these structures and learning to attend to them more and more openly with the whole of your experience is part of the many truths that zazen reveals. In the Class Six Outline in the series, “The Development of Buddhist Psychology”, the Roshi said,The Buddha has clearly seen that the root of dukkha was clinging to what could not be clung to. This clinging was the result of conceiving of the impermanent and dynamic exertion of experience to be a collection of real and permanent objects and entities, believing that this clinging will bring pleasure and satisfaction whereas it results only in suffering and confusion, and that what is selfless and beyond the personal is self and personal. The succession of these moments of grasping and confusion he called “samsara”, the “flow”. He called the cessation of this useless struggle and strategic approach to experience “nibbana”, the “blowing out”. In many places throughout the early texts, we find the Buddha again and again asking students to give up their spiritual and secular strategies and just understand something so obvious that it is often missed.

This is why we ask students to sit according to a schedule, why the Roshi has said so often that “the schedule IS Buddha”. The dreaded committed sittings and the schedule you have promised to follow is important because you have to make choices that go beyond compulsion in order to do it. It is something in your life that will insist that you go further than your habits and tendencies dictate and can invite you into the world of the Buddhas. The world of the Buddhas is unfabricated and unborn and you arrive there by releasing yourself into it.

We sit zazen and we do this practice because moment after moment, we do not understand. Any snippets of understanding that come and go are not enough. We cannot afford to entertain ourselves with our states, our thoughts, our interpretations, our fabrications. These are all part of how we misunderstand and will not help us to clarify our understanding. We cannot afford to be lazy. So this morning and throughout this Dharma Assembly, please make the effort to really practise the richness of colours and forms and sounds, the nuance of sensations. Allow the whole bodymind to live as the brightness of seeing, the depth of sound, as ever-changing sensations, and as the Luminosity of experiencing as a whole, by opening all around, all at
once.

Labels: Anatta, Luminosity, Zen 0 comments | |

“John Tan André, for the metta question it is not for altruistic reasons but rather to further open up oneself into total exertion.

Post anatta, one can access to the state of no mind easily and this state of no mind is "key" to opening up new dimension of the mind where experience turn maha, immense and great.

If possible, it is advisable to integrate a practice, be it yoga, pranayama or qi gong or vipassana or chanting where you can focus your attention into an oceanic state of no-mind as if everything in the 10 directions and 3 times are all into a single action.

Don't worry too much whether is it realistic, just don't place any limitation in the expansion in this practice. Just open up and connect as is presented in Hale's badly drawn diagram.😂” – John Tan, 2019, Total Exertion and Practices

Ancestral Karma, Total Exertion

-

  Albert Hong For something like total exertion, contemplation really helps. You can just intellectually contemplate interdependence and action. Like what is doing really? We are always doing. Everything is total flux. You hold that conceptually and then tune into and investigate. Then you can begin to consider the conditions that go into that action. With that effort and intention and holding of a view, you can easily skirt into non-conceptual understanding.

  Especially starting with a very repetitive task like washing dishes. The whole interdependent world is completely showcased in that activity. Hand to sponge to soap to water to dish to wiping to cleaning. All of it linked in it's immediacy. that keeps extending and extending until you see how your father is there, your mother, your friends, the sink, the water, etc. everything is there in the whole activity.

  So you can make insane efforts, you can do A LOT and with intensity. And that is the interdependent universe right there.

  You have to think about these things. You have to apply it to your life. To your actions. The funny thing is that it's actually how things are. The insight is just realizing that is already the case. The conceptual framework just mirrors and is a door to the as it is.

  2

  -
  - Like
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  Albert Hong Karma is interesting to consider as well. How our personal actions reflect infinitely. And how our vision of the world at the moment is completely the result of all casual conditions prior.

  For myself it is also understanding Ancestral karma that comes with the specific meat bag we carry around. Those energies and momentums are at play.

  But we can also understand the same concept from lineage. We are all carriers of lineage. And we are the pinnacle of the lineage.

We also hold the lineage of being human. Carrying the whole momentum of being human, the whole karmic package with its virtue and non virtue.

Each moment a choice, an act. Either we choose virtue or non virtue. And that moments choice creating the vector for the next moment.

Mind is continuous. to moments, to lifetimes, infinitely.

So contemplation of things like this makes ordinary, insignificant things very important and very extraordinary. Every action counts and reflects infinitely.

Your liberation is paramount for it sows the seeds and potentiality for others. It makes it easier for others. What each and everyone one of us does. For better or worse is reflective forever.

Eh and to negate everything I just wrote.

It's probably better to just sit in Zazen.

2

- Like
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Labels: Albert Hong, Total Exertion 0 comments | |

“...Nowadays I am being much more somatic, where there is no sense of self but merely sensation, and even the designation of flesh and blood body transcends into the mere sensation of feet touching ground, bodily movement, energy flow, breath flowing and abdomen expanding, sensation of hands touching on objects or bicycle handle, etc. A whole body awareness. All senses are bright, luminous, direct. Presencing is just these.” - Soh, 2019

“The intensity of radiance must naturally flow to the body first...

When we say naturally and effortlessly non-dual, it does not mean all 6 entries and exits all have the same intensity of clarity.

To me thoughtlessness first *(Soh: I AM)*, then vision, third comes sound... but hardest is sensation and most powerful... why is it most powerful?

As for the analogy of the chariot, there are the othodox and unorthodox way of interpretations. What are the 2?” – John Tan, 2020

"Anapanasati *(Mindfulness of Breathing)* is good. After your insight, master a form of technique that can bring you to the state of anatta without going through a thought process." - John Tan, 2013

“A state of freedom is always a natural state, that is a state of mind free from self/Self. You should familiarize yourself with the taste first. Like doing breathing meditation until there is no-self and left with the inhaling and exhaling... then understand what is meant by releasing.” - John Tan, 2013

“When we practice zazen our mind always follows our breathing. When we inhale, the air comes into the inner world. When we exhale, the air goes out to the outer world. The inner world is limitless, and the outer world is also limitless. We say “inner world” or “outer world,” but actually there is just one whole world. In this limitless world, our throat is like a swinging door. The air comes in and goes out like someone passing through a swinging door. If you think, “I breathe,” the “I” is extra. There is no you to say “I.” What we call “I” is just a swinging door which moves when we inhale and when we exhale. It just moves; that is all. When your mind is pure and calm enough to follow this movement, there is nothing: no “I,” no world, no mind nor body; just a swinging door.” - Zen Master Shunryu Suzuki

"Even up till longchen's (Sim Pern Chong's) stage [having realised non-duality], meditation is still very important except it should not be form and technique bound. So still sit and meditate. :) Spend quality hours in being naked... and let this continue till you experienced clearly what is the meaning of 'emptiness is form'. it can take 20-30 years. :P You must make it a habit, then you can progress fast. Even after experiencing non-dual, you must still work hard till it stabilizes. One should work harder after non-dual. :P So spend quality minutes in meditations. Don't just talk and ask for knowledge." - John Tan, 2007

“Anurag Jain

To expand further on the “equipoise” mentioned, what is important is both insight and samadhi in tandem

In addition to insights, samadhi is important for liberation. So meditation and having quality time to the equipoise of anatta everyday is important. John Tan’s samadhi is very strong and he enters deep samadhi almost instantly upon sitting down. Reason being he has been cultivating samadhi and entering nirvikalpa samadhi even at a young age after I AM, deep meditation. After anatta although emphasis is not on entering states but certain samadhi is still important

2011:

(8:29 PM) Thusness: removing the fetters is not to say no-emotion and be like a machine...
Through compassion you can also remove fetters in the Theravada model, how are you to remove the 3 poisons?
贪憎痴?
(8:32 PM) AEN: through insight, tranquillity, dispassion
(8:33 PM) Thusness: so what is lacking in the 7 phases of insight?

(8:35 PM) AEN: the 7 phases of insight are focused on the insight portion but i guess dispassion should arise after emptiness?
(8:36 PM) Thusness: it helps
so in addition to that, you must also practice samadhi for tranquility and calm

...

“In the early period of Budddhism, there were two yānas, śamatha yāna and vipaśyāna yāna; beginners went to Śariputra to training in vipaśyāna for stream entry; then they would go train in śamatha with Maudgalyana for further progress.

Lance Cousins wrote a very interesting article about this.

Cousins, L.S., 1984, ‘Samatha-yāna and vipassanā-yāna’ in Dhammapala D., et al., eds, Buddhist
Studies in Honour of Hammalava Saddhatissa, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka, pp. 56-68.” – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith

...

For the Theravadin/Pali canon map of awakening (for the Mahayana there is another somewhat correlated mapping in terms of bhumis):

	Moral virtue	Concentration	Wisdom	Fetters broken
Streamwinner	Complete	Limited	Limited	The first 3 fetters
Once-returner	Complete	Limited	Limited	The first 3 fetters & diminishing of lust, hate, delusion
Non-returner	Complete	Complete	Limited	The 5 lower fetters: reborn in the Pure Abodes,[45] and there attains final nirvana
Arhat	Complete	Complete	Complete	All 10 fetters

Table 4. The 4 types of saints and the three trainings (A 3.85/1:231 f), SD 3.3(2).[46]

- Piya Tan, https://www.themindingcentre.org/dharmafarer/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/21.6-Sila-samadhi-panna.pdf

...

“One in Training
Sekhin Sutta (1) (AN 3:87)

NavigationSuttas/AN/3:87

“Monks, this recitation of more than 150 training rules comes every fortnight, in reference to which sons of good families desiring the goal train themselves.1 There are these three trainings under which all that is gathered. Which three? The training in heightened virtue, the training in heightened mind, the training in heightened discernment.2 These are the three trainings under which all that is gathered.

“There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the ending of (the first) three fetters, he is a stream-winner, never again destined for states of woe, certain, headed for self-awakening.

“There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the ending of (the first) three fetters, and with the attenuation of passion, aversion, & delusion, he is a once-returner, who—on returning only once more to this world—will put an end to stress.

“There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the ending of the five lower fetters, he is due to spontaneously reappear (in the Pure Abodes), there to be totally unbound, destined never again to return from that world.

“There is the case where a monk is wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, wholly accomplished in discernment. With reference to the lesser and minor training rules, he falls into offenses and rehabilitates himself. Why is that? Because I have not declared that to be a disqualification in these circumstances. But as for the training rules that are basic to the holy life and proper to the holy life, he is one of permanent virtue, one of steadfast virtue. Having undertaken them, he trains in reference to the training rules. With the ending of effluents, he dwells in the effluent-free awareness-release and discernment-release, having directly known and realized them for himself right in the here-and-now.

“Those who are partially accomplished attain a part; those who are wholly accomplished, the whole. The training rules, I tell you, are not in vain.”

Notes

1. See AN 3:85, note 1.

2. For definitions of these trainings, see AN 3:90.”

“(21) Single-pointed stability of mind, on its own, lacks the perception that’s able to sever the root of recurring samsara; while discriminating awareness, parted from a stilled and settled pathway (of shamatha), cannot reverse disturbing emotions and attitudes, no matter how much it analytically discerns. But, when the discriminating awareness that’s totally decisive about the way things are mounts the horse of an unwaveringly stilled and settled

shamatha mind, then, destroying all focal supports of grasping for extreme views with the lance of Madhyamaka logic, devoid of extremes, this wide-ranging discriminating awareness that analytically discerns, in a correct manner, expands the intelligence to realize the nature of reality.
The ennobling, impeccable Lama has practiced like that. Let me, too, who strives for liberation, cultivate myself in the same way.

(22) An individual inspection that analytically discerns in a correct manner – what need to mention it actualizes absorbed concentration through familiarity with single-pointedness of mind – it enhances, in fact, an absorbed concentration that’s firmly and unwaveringly settled on the way things are. Those who, having seen (it’s like this), make effort to actualize a joined pair of a stilled and settled shamatha state and an exceptionally perceptive vipashyana state are truly remarkable.
The ennobling, impeccable Lama has practiced like that. Let me, too, who strives for liberation, cultivate myself in the same way.

- Tsongkhapa
[The Abbreviated Points of the Graded Path — Study Buddhism]
...

Buddha:

In Tandem
Yuganaddha Sutta (AN 4:170)
NAVIGATIONSuttas/AN/4:170
On one occasion Ven. Ānanda was staying in Kosambī at Ghosita’s monastery. There he addressed the monks, “Friends!”
“Yes, friend,” the monks responded to him.
Ven. Ānanda said: “Friends, whoever—monk or nun—declares the attainment of arahantship in my presence, they all do it by means of one or another of four paths. Which four?
“There is the case where a monk has developed insight preceded by tranquility. As he develops insight preceded by tranquility, the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it—his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.
“Then there is the case where a monk has developed tranquility preceded by insight. As he develops tranquility preceded by insight, the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it—his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.
“Then there is the case where a monk has developed tranquility in tandem with insight. As he develops tranquility in tandem with insight, the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it—his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.
“Then there is the case where a monk’s mind has its restlessness concerning the Dhamma [Comm: the corruptions of insight] well under control. There comes a time when his mind grows steady inwardly, settles down, and becomes unified & concentrated. In him the path is born. He follows that path, develops it, pursues it. As he follows the path, developing it & pursuing it—his fetters are abandoned, his obsessions destroyed.
“Whoever—monk or nun—declares the attainment of arahantship in my presence, they all do it by means of one or another of these four paths.”
See also: MN 149; SN 35:204; AN 2:29; AN 4:94; AN 10:71

John Tan:

“When you are luminous and transparent, don't think of dependent origination or emptiness, that is [the contemplative practice for] post-equipoise. When hearing sound, like the sound of flowing water and chirping bird, it is as if you are there. It should be non-conceptual, no sense of body or me, transparent, as if the sensations stand out. You must always have some quality time into this state of anatta. Means you cannot keep losing yourself in verbal thoughts, you got to have quality hours dedicated to relaxation and experience fully without self, without reservation." - John Tan, 2018

JT:

"After this insight, one must also be clear of the way of anatta and the path of practice. Many wrongly conclude that because there is no-self, there is nothing to do and nothing to practice. This is precisely using "self view" to understand "anatta" despite having the insight.

It does not mean because there is no-self, there is nothing to practice; rather it is because there is no self, there is only ignorance and the chain of afflicted activities. Practice therefore is about overcoming ignorance and these chain of afflictive activities. There is no agent but there is attention. Therefore practice is about wisdom, vipassana, mindfulness and concentration. If there is no mastery over these practices, there is no liberation. So one should not bullshit and psycho ourselves into the wrong path of no-practice and waste the invaluable insight of anatta. That said, there is the passive mode of practice of choiceless awareness, but one should not misunderstand it as the "default way" and such practice can hardly be considered "mastery" of anything, much less liberation."” – Soh, 2020

“One Pointedness

Thag 1:49 Rāmaṇeyyaka

NavigationSuttas/KN/Thag/1:49
Even with all the whistles & whistling,
the calls of the birds,
this, my mind, doesn’t waver,
for my delight is in
oneness.

.....

There are those that are mistaken about one-pointedness, they think after an advanced realization the practice of one-pointedness or shamatha becomes redundant or even harmful, as if one pointedness implies a dualistic state. This is a wrong understanding.

“Session Start: Saturday, 30 June, 2007

(10:23 PM) AEN: my mom ask something like how can things like visualisation lead to realisation of our nature, then she replied visualisation is you wei fa (conditioned dharma).... so you visualise something... cant remember what she said, but after you visualise your attention is focus there but eventually the visualised image is gone, emptied, then there is realisation.. cant exactly catch what she said. she also said anapanasati is you wei fa... so there is one pointedness but eventually even the focusing mind and the object is eventually also emptied
(10:29 PM) AEN: wat you tink.. eventually have to get rid one pointedness mind? i tink the visualising thing is interesting, its like whenever you visualise it just appears to you but you can drop it at any moment if i get wat she meant
(10:30 PM) Thusness: not exactly so.
(10:31 PM) AEN: anyway ren cheng also teach visualisation but im not 'initiated' into some of those practises
(10:31 PM) Thusness: whether visualisation or one pointedness, all these doesn't have to go. when there is wisdom, you can practice a particular path yet the wisdom remain.
(10:31 PM) AEN: hmm but its the mind that holds dualistic relation that has to go? cos when you have one pointedness there is still a dualistic mind rite
(10:32 PM) Thusness: it is the wrong view that has to go.
(10:32 PM) Thusness: nope. one pointedness is not a dualistic mind. one pointedness is a form of concentration.
(10:32 PM) AEN: yes
(10:32 PM) Thusness: focusing the mind.
(10:32 PM) AEN: its just like the rinpoche quote i sent you last time. the difference between shamatha and vipashyana. let me find
(10:32 PM) Thusness: it does not mean that one pointedness is dualistic
(10:33 PM) AEN: "Reply with Quote
I've found a wonderful definition of Vipasyana (Insight) Practise by Kalu Rinpoche from the "Luminous Mind" from another forum:

"When the mind abides in its natural state, its profound nature can gradually reveal itself, and all its qualities are uncovered. This is Vipassyana practise... Vipassyana...is to see clearly, to have insight into mind's nature and clear vision of its basic state.

...there are differences between the approaches of Shamatha and Vipassyana. Shamatha uses an object or reference, although a subtle one, upon which the mind meditates; a dualistic relationship is estblished between the mind and its object. In Vipassyana, however, mind and object are essentially one, not two, and remain this way.

...In Vipassyana, many thoughts go through the mind, but they are niether suppressed or followed. They arise and pass away without our having to interfere..Vipassyana...consists of letting go of thoughts, letting them be pacified and liberated by them selves..."

He mentions to always verify these experiences with a qualified teacher, to prevent from go
(10:33 PM) Thusness: don't get it wrong. even when a person is non-dual, he can still be one-pointedness. but the experience and wisdom is different. means he experiences clarity and absorption. they are not mutually exclusive.
(10:35 PM) AEN: icic but what the qn was
(10:35 PM) Thusness: nothing has to go. just an awakening
(10:35 PM) AEN: is that how can visualisation and 'you wei fa' lead to that sort of insight... so even the you wei fa and the mind that is concentrating also needs to drop off before one can realise rite

(10:36 PM) Thusness: dun get it wrong also. even if you practice insight meditation for entire life, your wisdom eye need not open too.
(10:36 PM) AEN: oic why
(10:37 PM) Thusness: u must accompanied it with the teaching of no-self. understanding no-self first, then practice. insight meditation is like an after effect. but buddha do opposite to create all necessary conditions. it is not the only condition. like after non-dual, insight is automatic. naturally there is no self and everything is experienced as it is. so buddha teach you the 'sensation' of a person after enlightenment. and explain how is the feeling like. he told you how the knowledge should be like. like a master tell you mind/body dropped, give up your body and mind
(10:40 PM) AEN: i don’t understand what you mean by understanding no-self first, you mean insight meditation doesn't lead to no-self, it's actually no-self leads to insight meditation?
(10:40 PM) Thusness: practice letting go of these 2 aspects. why so? because it is an important phase. so for one that has experienced it, he tells his experience... so one practices until there is realisation and the path, action and realisation become one.
(10:42 PM) AEN: but what you mean by understand no-self first. i mean i can understand no-self conceptually doesn't mean im enlightened rite? I still need to practise insight meditation to realise it isnt it
(10:42 PM) Thusness: understand no background first, no container, all those that i told you. what is the true meaning of no-self. there are those that tok a lot about no-self, but there is no correct understanding. just say change, no permanent self and so on and so forth, but there is no true understanding. like when you begin, what is no-self to you? it is always no inherent existence impermanence, this and that, get it? there is no real understanding. there is thinking no thinker. what does this mean? so now you know, there is no background. then you practice insight meditation. knowledge, practice then realisation. there is correct knowledge, but there is no quality practice therefore the realisation isn't there yet, and then comes the intensity of realisation.

(10:48 PM) AEN: so anyway you mean first conceptually understand no-self, thenafter that you practise insight meditation then you can open wisdom eye?
(10:49 PM) Thusness: opening of wisdom eye is just a shift of perception. it is just like you know how to enter a pathless path and can experience clarity immediately. but then even after non dual, you must go through a period of stabilizing first.”

“Excerpt from 2012 transcript with Thusness:
Jui asks: (? Question about samadhi)

John: actually what is more important is that background is completely gone. Then when the background is completely gone, you do not have a behind, only the sound. Then your experience becomes most direct, cannot be more direct. Then when you hear the basketball sound, bum bum bum.. only. You understand what I mean? Initially even if you have seen through, there will always be a tendency – you and the basketball. I ever went through a period where I thought that I will not have that problem anymore. After about three months later, it comes back. Then I wondered why does it come back after I have seen through? Then after that, the tendency (comes back?). for yours (me/Soh) it is quite clear, because lucid dream until one can control the three states, it is quite deep already. After the initial insight one needs 4-5 years to have that kind of calibre, you see? So some people are different. So it is sufficiently deep into the mind body tendency. For me, three months after (?) it has a dual sensation, then after still a period (?) after.

Jui: I always hear people say when you see one object you are like the object... but in my experience...

John: In your experience now, your self at the behind will be gone. But you are unable to reach completely mind to object (one pointedness). But your behind disappears. But to zhuan zhu yi ge (be absorbed in one [object]) you are unable to reach, that requires Samadhi state. That is, that behind is gone, but you are one pointed into one object, then with view you will experience maha experience, total exertion. He (me/Soh) is also the same, the behind is gone, no more self, only the sound but there is no self, there is just this, there is just that. That is because the insight has arisen but concentration (?) my way is different. Before insight of anatta I had decades of practicing meditation, then I AM, then meditation, then I AM. My practice is like that. (?) but for you guys, you see clearly first, the behind is gone and your experience becomes very clear and vivid and yet you are unable to concentrate. So you must understand that concentration is different. Peacefulness and releasing is (different), clear vivid awareness is also different. It requires different insights and practice. You still have to meditate, it is impossible that (?) you should be in this stage, you are very clear, the click click sound is felt to be very vivid, then one day you will have total exertion feeling, but you must practice releasing and concentration. When the mind is discursive and wandering, you need practice. your mindfulness/thought needs to be practiced. You need to have a stillness/Samadhi. (to me/Soh) Your stillness is still not enough. Your mind is still having thought after thought, you are unable to have stillness. But your insight is able to reach no self. You are still unable to reach stillness and releasing. It is not a matter of saying then you can reach it, it requires practice.

(Comments by Soh: before my realization of anatta I would do samatha and enter into jhanic bliss [samadhi bliss but not resting in nature of mind], afterwards it is more towards the bliss of no-self luminosity, yet samadhi is still vital)

Me: best way is to practice vipasssana?

John: Vipassana ... when it becomes non conceptual and non dual, it is even more difficult like for you, your insight is there, there is no self, yet when you sit you are unable to reach it. Because you need to focus. You need to focus your breath, (otherwise?) unable to reach it. For normal people they are able to reach it even easier. For you it is somewhat more difficult. So I always tell you, for example, for you and him the way of entering is by clear luminosity... feel as clear as possible. For example when you breathe, feel your breathe entirely. So you feel very very clear, just this breath you know. Then you feel the vividness. It is easier to enter this way.

Me: so you are advising Anapanasati?

John: yes of course, then you do many times. But when you do many times you are not counting. Don’t count. Just feel the entire sensation of the breath. You are just that sensation of your breath. Then you are so clear with your entire breath. That whole aircon that touches your nostrils, then going into your lungs. It is just this sensation. This is what we call breath. So you keep on doing. You are very aware of it. Actually it is not you are very aware of lah. This is what I call awareness and the whole thing is awareness, there is no somebody awaring. It is just breath. Then slowly you will have this (Samadhi?), you need to keep doing.”

“Total exertion is shamatha and vipassana into one. It is total focus and involvement of the entire body-mind, of everything. However that requires post-anatta insight.” - John Tan, 2019

Update: John Tan wrote, “[12/2/19, 12:07:49 AM] John Tan: This part is not exactly correct *(about the statement made above on total exertion)*
[12/2/19, 12:09:53 AM] John Tan: Can be said to be effortless yet whole-hearted involvement. But more importantly is like anatta, a perception shift.”

“The best way to still your mind is to observe your breath. To calm yourself you must learn to first follow your breath. Then be mindful genuinely of how the breath flow and how abdominal breathing helps. Don't listen to people, experience with your own mindfulness and test... Feel how chest breathing is hindering your breath. You must experiment yourself..” - John Tan, 2019

“Total Relaxation and Openness

[6/7/24, 4:07:18 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ya but as a practice im more inclined towards total relaxation than intensifying radiance these days.. theres a quality of like falling asleep but not falling into unconsciousness but just blanking out into radiant empty appearances by relaxing and releasing whole body mind into openness. Thats not a v good way to put it but idk how to say haha.. thats why nowadays i think im more into calmness and openness
[6/7/24, 4:11:07 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Radiance or not is no longer a concern.. when appearances are they are naturally radiant but if consciousness fade then so be it haha <This message was edited>
[6/7/24, 4:14:01 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Many mystics stress radiance but i think buddha’s emphasis on dispassion is also important, even dispassion towards consciousness
[6/7/24, 4:20:19 PM] Soh Wei Yu: This full recognition of selflessness in the suttas is always paired later with leading to dispassion
[6/7/24, 4:20:22 PM] Soh Wei Yu: E.g.
[6/7/24, 4:21:53 PM] Soh Wei Yu: SN 46.73 Anatta Sutta (abridged):
Here monks, a monk develops the awakening factor of mindfulness accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of dhamma-investigation accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of energy accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of joy accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of tranquility accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of meditative composure accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, resulting in letting go. He develops the awakening factor of equanimity accompanied by the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory, dependent upon seclusion, dispassion, and

cessation, resulting in letting go.

It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it is of great fruit and benefit. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that one of two fruits is to be expected: either final gnosis in this very life or, if there is a residue of clinging, the state of nonreturning. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great good. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to great security from bondage. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to a great sense of urgency. It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to dwelling in great comfort.
[6/7/24, 4:22:33 PM] Soh Wei Yu: This great comfort “It is in this way that the recognition of selflessness in what is unsatisfactory is developed and cultivated so that it leads to dwelling in great comfort.” Maybe related to the total relaxation that i said <This message was edited>
[6/7/24, 4:32:21 PM] Soh Wei Yu: So now practice is like, open and relax, if its contracted, open and relax contraction. If it seems open and relax, open and relax even further.. no end haha

Not heighten the radiance everywhere. Very often that leads to tenseness instead <This message was edited>
[6/7/24, 4:45:10 PM] Soh Wei Yu: There is a lightness and sweetness in relaxing and resting in illusory holographic luminous appearances
[6/7/24, 6:18:38 PM] John Tan: Don't worry about falling into asleep or not, don't have and pre-determined expectation much like quantum probability wave function (I like quantum probability wave explanation) 🤦
[6/7/24, 6:23:05 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[6/7/24, 6:25:16 PM] John Tan: Radiance must be openly and clearly experienced but so called "consciousness fading" also not rejected. Essentially 心行处灭 (Soh: the cessation of mental formations)。Means when you practice, all the elements (earth, water, space, fire, wind) be fully experienced...if you are authenticating one element, fully authenticate, when gone, gone.
[6/7/24, 6:25:56 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[6/7/24, 6:31:27 PM] John Tan: Then you will have no fear and no attachment
[6/7/24, 6:32:49 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[6/7/24, 6:33:30 PM] John Tan: If radiance isn't tasted, we are not understand how miraculous it is.
[6/7/24, 6:36:06 PM] John Tan: [Soh: Many mystics stress radiance but i think buddha’s emphasis on dispassion is also important, even dispassion towards consciousness]

Yes.
[6/7/24, 6:40:24 PM] John Tan: You must understand open and relax do not mean you have to open and relax, it just means not attached at all, no chasing for a particular result in simple language.
[6/7/24, 6:40:39 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[6/7/24, 6:41:31 PM] John Tan: Self is just these grasping tendencies, without which, there is no-self.

[6/7/24, 6:43:33 PM] John Tan: Next time see whether you are able to separate clear experience from these grasping...
[6/7/24, 6:44:51 PM] Soh Wei Yu: ic..
[6/7/24, 6:46:12 PM] John Tan: Open also means allowing the totality of situation/conditions to present itself.
[6/7/24, 6:46:56 PM] John Tan: Open also means purity free from all elaborations
[6/7/24, 6:48:00 PM] John Tan: Also means potentialities
[6/7/24, 6:50:07 PM] John Tan: This message was deleted.
[6/7/24, 6:50:55 PM] John Tan: When you say free from all elaborations, you must at the same time understand the potentiality for every elaboration.
[6/7/24, 7:26:51 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. not sure i understand haha
[6/7/24, 7:27:22 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Its like engaging in conventions but still free?
[6/7/24, 8:54:22 PM] John Tan: No
[6/7/24, 8:55:02 PM] John Tan: It's like no forms means free to be any forms”

“Many people mistaken letting go and dispassion in terms of dissociation (a subject 'letting go' and 'standing back' from object). This is not true letting go or dispassion.

'In the seen just the seen' with no 'you in terms of that' is true dispassion. It is the state where each sound, each color, each sensation is happening on its own, manifests on its own as its own radiance, and yet there is completely no additional fabrication, or whatever kind of identity in relation to that. This complete emptiness of any kind of identity and clinging or subject-object relation in relation to 'in the seen just the seen', 'in the heard just the heard' is true dispassion.

A dissociated state is just another form of grasping, attachment. It is attaching at 'something' or 'someone' being more true and real than the rest of the field.” - Soh, 2018

[5:00 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: Don't just look at releasing of grasping...look at the creative living expression...
[5:02 PM, 12/31/2019] John Tan: But first clearly understand and taste clarity/appearance without any distortion..

“Also in moments of peak experience, I see we have to overcome the habitual tendencies of distracted thoughts... means we must be able to completely silent our mind and be able to have no thoughts at all to fully experience the fullness and presence of our six senses without a single trace of thought or sense of self... the trees, the sky, the breeze, everything in its complete intensity without thoughts. I'm not saying thought must be stopped at all moments, but like Eckhart Tolle said, after awakening 90% of his (unnecessary) thoughts just disappeared and thats what make a difference to his life. Without this we will not be able to feel the intensity of total Presence. So meditate and do yoga. Realization alone is insufficient without shamatha. Yes, you can experience anatta even when there are wandering thoughts because it is always already so, but one can never fully appreciate the Presence, total life, intelligence and awareness... it is a whole different level.

In other words: thoughts are ok, but you must have 'mastery' over them. Means unnecessary thoughts do not arise.” - Soh, 2015

A conversation with John Tan in 2007:

“John: Anyway I read a lot talking about you [can] have a lot of thoughts during meditation and you are doing correctly. That is pure nonsense. Lack of practice and misunderstanding. Cannot be taken to mean a form of achievement. There are thoughts, but thoughts are reduced tremendously and there is this clear insight of their spontaneity. means like what [Sixth Ch’an/Zen Patriarch] Hui-Neng said [about] thoughtlessness, but it arises due to the presence of conditions, not from attachments. When there is attachments, there are a lot of thoughts, and these thoughts are dualistic in nature. thought must reduce tremendously for clarity to arise. The nakedness aspect, the crystal clarity aspect. This is because of habitual propensities in action.

When one has some experience but is unable to understand the transcendental experience but due to the lack of practice is unable to touch the most essential and fundamental of our nature. So in the mind, there is this constant contemplation using thoughts to articulate things to understand, to know. But it is hardly anywhere near to crystal clarity. First thing ask oneself, are there symbols attached to experience? Are there any meanings attached to these symbols? If what is felt and understood are the meaning of the symbols, then there is a waste of time. In meditation, it is the nakedness, the qualities of our luminosity that is experienced. like clarity, spontaneity, blissfulness, realness, energy... nothing to do with symbols, meaning, purpose... etc”

2006:

(7:52 PM) John: she doesn't consider ET to be spiritual teachers
(7:53 PM) John: but spiritual master
(7:53 PM) John: 🙄
(7:53 PM) AEN: oic..
(7:53 PM) John: like comparable to buddha and jesus. 😜
(7:53 PM) John: self realisation without ego.
(7:53 PM) John: 🙄
(7:53 PM) AEN: hahaha
(7:53 PM) AEN: oic
(7:54 PM) John: self realisation is not just so and there are many levels.
(7:54 PM) John: it is just the beginning
(7:54 PM) John: the portals are especially important
(7:54 PM) AEN: icic
(7:54 PM) AEN: those inner body meditation, breathing meditation all those stuff taught by eckhart you mean?
(7:54 PM) John: one must go beyond symbols for the strength of clarity to surface
(7:55 PM) John: yes but the key is to go beyond names and labels and touch our pristine awareness
(7:55 PM) John: and experience reality as it is....gradually the bond will loosen and subsides
(7:56 PM) John: and the clarity, vitality and intelligence of our nature will take over.

(7:56 PM) AEN: icic..
(7:56 PM) John: before that, practice hard to go beyond our conceptual mind
(7:56 PM) AEN: oic
(7:56 PM) John: with the tranquil calmness that i said.
(7:56 PM) AEN: icic
(7:57 PM) John: then it becomes sustainable and must be at least for 30 mins before we begin to experience the clarity and vitality
(7:57 PM) AEN: oic..
(7:57 PM) John: not 30 mins of meditation
(7:58 PM) AEN: ya was wondering wat you mean
(7:58 PM) AEN: haha
(7:58 PM) John: 30 mins at least of thoughtlessness in meditation for the clarity and vitality to surface.
(7:58 PM) AEN: ya even my teacher say usually for beginner it takes at least 30 minutes of meditation
(7:58 PM) John: means ability to see in 'raw'
(7:58 PM) AEN: so should meditate at least 30 minutes
(7:58 PM) John: no not 30 mins of meditation
(7:59 PM) AEN: oh you mean just thoughtlessness anywhere?
(7:59 PM) John: by at least 30 so mins to maintain the gap between 2 moment of thoughts
(7:59 PM) John: one must put effort into mastering this
(7:59 PM) AEN: oh so you mean at least 30 mins of gap is needed before one can experience clarity and vitality?
(7:59 PM) AEN: wah..
(8:00 PM) John: through letting go until a tranquil calmness arises, b4 that, we would be able to have ability to enter into our natural state.
(8:00 PM) John: yes
(8:00 PM) John: it is a different type of experience.
(8:00 PM) AEN: what is different type of experience?
(8:01 PM) John: one must be able to break the bond of conceptual thought first.
(8:01 PM) John: then the clarity and vitality aspect can arise
(8:01 PM) John: then you can begin to understand more. 🙂
(8:02 PM) John: the realisation will help us in the understanding
(8:02 PM) John: without the realisation, it becomes a stage of achievement. 🙂
(8:02 PM) AEN: oic
(8:05 PM) John: i have stressed so many times about the bond and the power of it, but few people can really understand what i meant...ai...
(8:05 PM) AEN: icic..
(8:06 PM) John: you must learn how to meditate and practice mindfulness till you are able to go pre-symbolic
(8:06 PM) AEN: oic..

(8:07 PM) John: the actual experience is most important

“John: stilling the body and mind only result in a deep and stable calmness that gather strength. for the other quality to arise, it needs the direct experience and intuitive wisdom

John: the letting go is to settle the mind till he is about to have mastery over the thought patterns. This is very important for progress. direct perception is crucial, because buddha nature cannot be understood conceptually. But without the ground of deep calmness, there is no strength. And one might suffer because we do not know how to deal with these experience.” - John Tan, 2006

“In my opinion many of our great aspirations and high views turn empty talks easily.

After the direct insight of anatta, it opens the gate that allows one to experience effortlessly all sensations that arise without duality, without fear, without doership and without ownership. Many are unable to see the "whys and "how" of "directness", so don't waste your insights that have given the opportunity in this life.

Train yourself to do that with sincerity and dedication first. Then you will be fully in touch with your original purity; you will be genuinely in touch with peace and openness."

More later:

"If we want to experience fully and have genuine peace, be very sincere in sensing all your sensations for pretense, blames, rejections and contractions... ...don't rush... slow down your thoughts and scan all your sensations for these... see all these traces... see all these come from the "I"s and "mine"s... develop a strong willingness to let go with your insights of anatta. If you can for a brief moment be free from the conceit of I, the craving of mine and the background of I AM, that moment you are respectable even to the gods.

I do not want you to get into too high views and lose touch with genuine and simple practice."

John Tan wrote in 2007,

“(5:29 PM) John: what are the 3 characteristics (of self-liberation)?
(5:29 PM) Soh: impermanence, suffering, no self ?
(5:29 PM) John: nope, I just told you the other day. Completely non-dual and transparent. Completely fearless. Completely non-attached. So if a person after the experience of no-self, and is able to attain this 3 characteristics, then his hui geng (wisdom root) is truly deep. da geng qi (superior capacity). means the enlightenment of non-dual of our nature leads directly to self liberation. that is because the 'sense of self' is completely eliminated from 7th [consciousness] and karmic propensities become self liberated. Even after initial realization of anatta, we have to continue practicing and meditating until these three aspects are perfected.”

“One Action Samadhi (一行三昧)

Those who regard the mundane as a hindrance to life and practice only understand that in the mundane nothing is sacred; what they have not yet understood is that in sacredness nothing is mundane.
— Dōgen, Genjokoan

As a Soto Zen teacher said (too lazy to find his exact quote, but it goes something like this) - I am not devaluing the status of the precious jewel to the ordinary, I am elevating the status of the ordinary to the status of the precious jewel.

But this requires realisation of anatta. Prior to that, pure presence seems special and transcendent, metaphysical (spaceless and timeless) and exists outside the realm of the mundane and ordinary. The mundane and ordinary seems dry and barren, devoid of “spirit” or “presence” and is merely a distraction. After I AM realization at the age of 17, John Tan always entered nirvikalpa samadhi and was very much inspired to renounce as a monk and follow the footsteps of Ramana Maharshi in Arunachala. As he said, at that time any attention to the outer world of the five senses seemed like a distraction from the transcendent bliss of pure Being, which is Presence tasted only in the Mind door and not yet realised in the other senses. He only did not renounce due to strong family resistance.

The way of Anatta is different. The taste of I AMness is similar but now tasted in every single myriad dharmas, the ten thousand things. Furthermore, anything short of the total exertion of a single dharma and activity even in each mundane and ordinary activity like chop wood and carry water, fully engaged and involved as “being-time”, where satori and samadhi (一行三昧) is fully actualized in the daily activities of eating, drinking, shitting and sleeping, anything less than that is not considered zen enlightenment.

Still, we diligently sit in zazen, and practice goes on endlessly according to Dogen. I like Soto Zen for their dedication to zazen and enjoy sitting with them for hours each time back in Australia. I do not have access to Soto Zen in Singapore but I enjoy meditating in parks.”

~ *Mantra*

“[24/3/19, 11:39:05 PM] John Tan: Next time I teach you to do simple breathing and use sound vibration to expand your consciousness. Cut away all myth lol... it should be good for you.
[24/3/19, 11:40:11 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. what myth
[24/3/19, 11:40:32 PM] John Tan: All those mantra. But there are a few key points. Just inhale and exhale with your stomach and hold your breath and sort of chanting on to allow it to vibrate throughout your body but your tongue must tuck up. Chanting OM. It will expand your consciousness
[24/3/19, 11:46:43 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. ya I was just chanting om before you wrote haha

[24/3/19, 11:46:52 PM] John Tan: Lol. You must go with your breathing to be powerful. Before exhalation, tucked up your tongue, hold your breath, produce the Mmmmmmm... Sound... let it vibrates throughout your body then breathe in and out again 2-3 times and repeat for 10 sets. You will enter into another form of non-dual...lol. It is a hollow vibration within in empty space... Blissful, non-dual and focus. Easy to practice. Powerful and healthy.” (Also see: https://bodhiactivity.wordpress.com/2010/12/01/benefits-and-qualities-of-the-six-syllables-mantra/)

~ *Sky Gazing*

[21/7/19, 7:44:40 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I like sitting on park benches nowadays.. I’m becoming like eckhart tolle 🤣
[21/7/19, 8:39:46 PM] John Tan: Like being silent and experience luminosity is in everyone that break-through I AMness. Like hearing music or gazing sky, there is not even a sense of dual and background. When sitting quietly listening to music, the clarity of sound is of no difference from my heart beats... even drips of water of a tap...
[21/7/19, 8:43:01 PM] John Tan: However this is not the practice of mature practitioners.
[21/7/19, 8:43:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. What is the practice of mature practitioners
[21/7/19, 8:44:04 PM] John Tan: I have already told you
[21/7/19, 8:44:19 PM] Soh Wei Yu: You mean in marketplace
[21/7/19, 8:44:37 PM] John Tan: My energy from yoga is intense but have you seen me talking? Even to remain silent and not boast is practice. Are you able to do the pose I do and breathe like I breathe at age 50+. Lol
[21/7/19, 8:46:14 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. lol
[21/7/19, 8:46:47 PM] John Tan: The inner development must include the ability to be contented in oneself. When I sit in silent listening to meditation music, I was like being "there". This I have told you. You should look at the wide sky
[21/7/19, 8:50:11 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. Like sky gazing dzogchen meditation haha
[21/7/19, 8:51:17 PM] John Tan: I do not know what they do. Lol. The reason nowadays I don't want to talk to you about experience is because you are already attached to experience. Elena wrote something about getting "real". You know what that means?
[21/7/19, 9:02:29 PM] Soh Wei Yu: “4) Sky-gazing

Sometimes called "mingling the threefold sky" or "namkha arted." This is an important Dzogchen practice to enhance one's released shiné. Basically, one mingles one's consciousness with the infinitude of the sky, thereby actively undoing the subject-object duality.”
[21/7/19, 9:02:39 PM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted
[21/7/19, 9:03:09 PM] John Tan: Then it is the same... lol. Mingling one's consciousness with the infinitude of the sky undoing the subject-object duality... I didn’t know that is the purpose of [dzogchen] sky gazing 👍 Allowing the infinitude to dissolve whatever traces that is left... However one should not be attached to blissfulness of non-dual. Rather what you should learn is if you were in [redacted person] place, having all those issues, how are you to heal yourself. That is more important... Tell me what "Elena" meant by getting "real"
[21/7/19, 9:13:47 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Like this? “Rather what you should learn is if you were in [redacted person] place, having all those issues, how are you to heal yourself.”
[21/7/19, 9:14:26 PM] John Tan: What is this "healing" about?

Besides the practices described above, energy and yogic practices are also important. See the chapter on “Health, Energy and Somatic Practices, Yoga and Diet”

Also, on the topic of healing, I found this book fascinating - Dying to be Me by Anita Moorjani and can highly recommend. John Tan has described miraculous healings to me before based on his own experience, but I shall digress.

STAGE 6: The Nature of Presence is Empty (“Sunyata / Secondfold Emptiness”)

“[7:49 PM, 4/17/2021] John Tan: I think non-arisen, non-inherentness, illusoriness emptiness have sunk quite deeply in me already.
[8:00 PM, 4/17/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. any triggers? Or just contemplating mmk (mulamadhyamikakarika)
[8:02 PM, 4/17/2021] John Tan: I dunno but it is more experiential taste. And the understanding of it is clear and firmed. Radiance is overshadowed by such realization and understanding. I am letting it sinks slow and deep.
[8:04 PM, 4/17/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. What do you mean by radiance is overshadowed, not as important?
[8:21 PM, 4/17/2021] John Tan: Means illusionariness overshadowed radiance”

"What is empty and non-arising in Buddhist context is important. Realizing this practitioner liberates the pure sensory experiences... In anatta, experience is characterized by the brilliance of whatever arises in a state of no-mind. In phase 6, the total exertion of this immediate pure appearance is realized to be empty and non-arising. You must directly taste and realize the nature of pure experience/appearances." "In anatta, it is clear that presence is experienced in the 6 entries and exits. But still it is not the degree of perfection. Spontaneous perfection requires one to realize the non-arising nature" - John Tan, 2014

“[3/8/19, 5:10:10 PM] John Tan: Non-arising means appearances without essence similar to a reflection, like a rainbow.”

Yin Ling shared something by Tsongkhapa and John Tan said “This is perhaps the most important point for me post anatta insight. So profound and deep.🙏””

The text or quote:

Tsongkhapa short verse on his profound enlightenment to the truth.
***

In a short verse work composed as a letter to his first attendant, Tsakho Ngawang Drakpa, Tsongkhapa would articulate this crucial point about the equation between emptiness and dependent origination:

When, with respect to all phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa,
You see that cause and effect never transgress their laws,
And when you have dismantled the focus of objectification,
At that point, you have entered the path that pleases the buddhas.

As long as the two understandings—
Of appearance, the regulated world of dependent origination,
And of emptiness, the absence of all standpoints—remain separate,
You have not realized the intent of the Sage.

However, at some point when, without alteration and at once,
The instant you see that dependent origination is undeceiving
If the entire object of grasping at certitude is dismantled,
At that point your analysis of the view is complete.

Furthermore, when appearance dispels the extreme of existence, And when emptiness dispels the extreme of nonexistence,
And you understand how emptiness arises as cause and effect, You will never be swayed by views grasping at extremes.

—-
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid05SSRHLhawgFDBw6ZX99NPb82Lp55iY5RnEVNB4uV2EhZ9qffXzLEenmKCyoEBJN7l&id=514979306

Soh wrote in 2022,

"Soh Wei Yu
William Lim
Everyone understands dynamic but not everyone understands what is dynamic is dependently originating and non arising like a rainbow or reflection. Vividly present yet nothing there. Hence the dynamic phenomena is also free of some sort of real existence undergoing arising, abiding and ceasing.
Dynamic phenomena can be mistaken as not empty - that is, it may be mistaken that there exists phenomena that have some sort of real essence or existence that is truly undergoing arising, abiding and ceasing by its own self existence, even if that process happens momentarily and quickly.
Reply7wEdited
Soh Wei Yu
“Pursuant to the middle view, Tson-kha-pa cites Nagarjuna's Yuk-tisastika and Candrakirti's Yuktisastika-vrtti.
Nagarjuna:

What arises in dependence is not born;
That is proclaimed by the supreme knower of reality 😊 Buddha).
Candrakirti:
(The realist opponent says): If (as you say) whatever thing arises in dependence is not even born, then why does (the Madhyamika) say it is not born? But if you (Madhyamika) have a reason for saying (this thing) is not born, then you should not say it "arises in dependence." Therefore, because of mutual inconsistency, (what you have said) is not valid.)
(The Madhyamika replies with compassionate interjection:)
Alas! Because you are without ears or heart you have thrown a challenge that is severe on us! When we say that anything arising in dependence, in the manner of a reflected image, does not arise by reason of self-existence - at that time where is the possibility of disputing (us)!” - excerpt from Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real: Buddhist Meditation and the Middle View
Reply7w"

"Non arisen means like reflection of moon on water, nothing is created or originated anywhere in the water but appears due to dependencies. If nothing is created or originated despite appearance, how can we speak of the real arising, abiding, cessation of said entity?

If something could arise and exist by way of self existence, that would also contradict the possibility of its dependent origination and impermanence conventionally. It is precisely because everything is illusory without essence like a reflection, that its appearance and dynamic potentiality is possible, by way of dependent origination."

A friend Jayson MPaul also wrote, "Rainbows need to have eyes in correct position, water droplets, light, radiant mind, all like so for rainbow to appear. Move slightly and rainbow is gone. Never came from anywhere, stayed anywhere, or went anywhere. The rainbow was insubstantial, but vividly displayed. All phenomena are like this."

Also

“[3/8/19, 5:10:10 PM] John Tan: Non-arising means appearances without essence similar to a reflection, like a rainbow.”

John Tan, 2022: "In addition to anatta insight, one must be able to intuit what this insight is all about with the rainbow analogy. We don't actually understand what DO is pointing. Most see from emptiness (freedom from elaboration) and non-arisen point of view perspective only."

Soh Wei Yu
11m ·
Shared with Your friends
Journey from Anatta to Emptiness
[5/6/22, 3:56:54 PM] Soh Wei Yu: No background besides manifestation, manifestation are self luminous and empty without agent, watcher or doer
[5/6/22, 3:59:54 PM] John Tan: Still only anatta then pure appearances as one's radiance clarity. That will not lead you to the insight of emptiness. You need two more insights, what are those?

[5/6/22, 4:00:22 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Whatever dependently originates are non arising, everything is like chariot
[5/6/22, 4:00:40 PM] John Tan: Ur head.
[5/6/22, 4:01:11 PM] John Tan: How does anatta lead you to such understanding?
[5/6/22, 4:01:25 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Anatta is before emptiness
[5/6/22, 4:01:35 PM] Soh Wei Yu: But it sees through inherent view of awareness and background
[5/6/22, 4:01:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: So is also a form of emptiness
[5/6/22, 4:02:02 PM] John Tan: So from anatta, without any linked, you jumped to emptiness?
[5/6/22, 4:02:52 PM] John Tan: Empty of self-nature, inherent existence is one of the important insights.
[5/6/22, 4:06:31 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Anatta leads to seeing the self and consciousness as a construct like weather or chariot.. when applied to all phenomena they are also like that, non arisen
So seeing through the background and [inherent existence of] awareness leads to direct taste of manifestation, likewise seeing through the constructs of objects leads to vivid nonrefential empty clarity-appearance.. meaning no longer apprehended as entities or objects with characteristics
Like red is no longer mistaken to be redness of flower as an object, the redness and flower deconstructs into mere vivid red
[5/6/22, 4:06:34 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic
[5/6/22, 4:17:15 PM] John Tan: Yes you realized "self/Self" is learnt, there is no self. A reified mental construct, a named thing mistaken as real. Then you extend that insight to all phenomena. A thorough de-construction of inherentness on all aspects of named things in which “觉” (Soh: Awareness) is one of such phenomena/dharma only, although a very crucial one. All these deal directly with alaya in "uprooting" ignorance, this deals with alaya.
If you stay at this, "No background besides manifestation, manifestation are self luminous and empty without agent, watcher or doer", then you only know "oh, there is no self" and all Ur focus is on elimating self, it will not lead to emptiness.
[5/6/22, 4:19:07 PM] John Tan: If you go further, then you will have understanding of primordial purity and equality through seeing through all notions and self-nature.
[5/6/22, 4:27:56 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5/6/22, 4:31:54 PM] Soh Wei Yu: When i say luminous and empty i mean also unreal, illusory like a reflection and like chariot, not any inherent entity
[5/6/22, 4:32:14 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Otherwise will be luminous and real like AF lol
[5/6/22, 6:43:54 PM] John Tan: Yes

John tan:

“To me, realization simply means authenticating the view experientially; in other words, an experiential insight and taste of the view like anatta or emptiness or non-arisen of "chariot" in real-time.”
John Tan highly recommends this: Revealing Nagarjuna Series: All 12 Parts and John Dunne's Free Online Resources , the teacher John Dunne has expressed all 7 phases of insights.

The Samadhirāja Sūtra states:

“Youth, bodhisattva mahāsattvas know well that all phenomena are insubstantial, devoid of inherent existence, devoid of signs, devoid of characteristics, nonarising, unceasing, devoid of syllables, empty, peace from the beginning, and utterly pure by nature.

…

The Bhagavān, knowing the thoughts that were in the mind of the youth Candraprabha, said to him, “Young man, bodhisattva mahāsattvas will attain all these qualities, and they will quickly attain the highest, complete enlightenment of perfect buddhahood, if they possess just one quality. What is that one quality? Young man, it is when the bodhisattva mahāsattvas know the nature of all phenomena.

“Young man, how do bodhisattva mahāsattvas know the nature of all phenomena? Young man, bodhisattva mahāsattvas know that all phenomena are nameless; they have no names. They know that all phenomena have no vocalization, they have no expression in speech, they have no letters, they have no birth, they have no cessation, they have no characteristics of cause, they have no characteristics of conditions, they are devoid of characteristics, they have the one characteristic of having no characteristics, they are devoid of attributes, they cannot be conceived of, they have no thought, and they have no mentality.”

“The absence of characteristics [alakṣaṇa] is a synonym for emptiness [śūnyatā].

In short, we believe we are a self that possesses characteristics, or that objects are discrete entities that possess characteristics. In realizing emptiness however, it is recognized non-conceptually and experientially that there is no object or self that possesses characteristics, and without the inherent object to possess characteristics, characteristics cease to be characteristics.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

“Thoughts *(and whatever else that appears in one’s experience)* are neither arising and ceasing, nor non-arising and non-ceasing… …Whatever manifests *(dharma/appearances/phenomena/pure sensory experiences)* is directly realized to be non-arising because of dependent origination.” - John Tan, 2014

“Emptiness and non-arising must also strongly trigger us that we have completely MISTAKEN! About what? About all experiential phenomena thought to be originated, abided and ceased are actually not so by the prajna realization of non-arising and emptiness. It is a specific realization of dependent arising because one realizes that whatever arises in dependence does not truly arise, abide or cease. When I asked you where is the scenery, where is this arising sound when in Anatta and non-dual mode? What do you think is the purpose?” – John Tan, 2015

“I pay respect to the best among speakers who, having attained Enlightenment, has taught relative origination (Pratītyasamutpāda) which is no-cessation, no-origination, no- annihilation, no-abiding, no-one-thing, no-many-thing, no-coming-in, no-going-out; being the termination of linguistic description (Prapañcopashamam), it is the good (Shivam)” - Nagarjuna [Ram Candra Pandey & Mañju, 1999, pp.1].

"The perfectly enlightened buddhas-proclaimed, 'What is dependently created is uncreated.'"
- Candrakīrti

"Whatever is dependently originated does not truly arise."
- Mañjuśrī

"What originates dependently is unoriginated!"
- Nāgārjuna

"That phenomena are born from causes can never be inconsistent [with facts]; since the cause is empty of cause, we understand it to be empty of origination. The non-origination of all phenomena is clearly taught to be emptiness."

- Nāgārjuna

“Neither from itself, nor from another, nor from both, nor without a cause, does anything, anywhere, ever, arise” (MMK I:1) - Nāgārjuna

“That which originates due to a cause and does not abide without [certain] conditions, but disappears when the conditions are absent: How can it be understood to ‘exist?’” - Nāgārjuna

[12:08 AM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Sentient being see production from cause and conditions but they do not see non-production, they see true production.
[12:09 AM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: When it is non-origination is realized from origination in dependence, that is DO [dependent origination].

The Unfindable Fullness: How a Drum, a Rainbow, and a Mirage Unlock the Heart Sūtra
Soh
中文版：
白话优化版: 不可得的圆满：鼓声、虹光与海市蜃楼如何开启《心经》
不可得的圆满：鼓声、虹光与海市蜃楼如何开启《心经》
I wrote this for my mother, who asked for an explanation of the Heart Sutra. After reading the Chinese translation of this article, John Tan said, 'This translation is quite good, although it could be expanded.' Version 0.2
The Unfindable Fullness: How a Drum, a Rainbow, and a Mirage Unlock the Heart Sūtra
The *Heart Sūtra* presents a profound challenge to our everyday perception. Its central declaration, “form is emptiness; emptiness is form,” and its sweeping negations—“no eye, no ear... no mind... no attainment”—can easily be mistaken for a nihilistic denial of the world. Yet, this radical teaching is not about annihilation but about de-reification: a precise dismantling of our tendency to project solid, independent existence onto a fluid, interdependent world. To truly grasp this, we need not leap into abstract philosophy but can begin with tangible, elegant analogies found within the Buddhist tradition itself. The sound of a drum, the appearance of a rainbow, and the eight classic examples of illusion

reveal that emptiness, or śūnyatā, is not a void but the very unfindability and lack of an independent core that allows phenomena to manifest vividly and function flawlessly.

The Drum: Emptiness as the Unfindability of Essence

The analogy of the drum, detailed in *The Questions of an Old Lady* sūtra (*Mahallikāpariṗrcchā*, Toh 171), provides the foundational logic. When a drum is struck, a sound arises. Our immediate instinct is to locate this "sound." Is it in the wood frame? The stretched hide? The stick? The hand that strikes it? The sūtra systematically deconstructs this search, concluding that “The sound does not dwell in the wood... hide... stick... [or] the person’s hand.” The sound is utterly unfindable in any of its constituent parts, nor does it exist as a separate, free-floating entity apart from them. This investigation is a search for the sound's essence or core—a self-sufficient "sound-thing" that can be pinned down. The failure to find such a core reveals its emptiness.

Because no self-contained "sound-thing" can be located, what we conventionally call its "existence" is revealed to be nothing more than a dependent designation—a label we apply to this functional confluence of conditions. This points to the crucial Middle Way, which is free from the extremes of existence and non-existence. The sound is not an inherently existing entity (eternalism), nor is it a complete nothingness (nihilism), since it clearly functions. Its functioning is purely conventional, designated upon dependencies. Remove any one condition—the hide, the effort, the air to carry the vibration—and the sound vanishes. The sūtra is explicit: “Because of these conditions, it is termed sound... That which is termed sound is also empty. It has no coming. It has no going... all phenomena are inherently stopped.” (*Mahallikāpariṗrcchā*, Toh 171, 84000). It doesn't travel from a sound-realm to our ear. This is the essence of what the Heart Sūtra compresses into the terms “unborn, unceasing.” The drum’s sound is empty of a findable, static core, and precisely because of this unfindability, it can arise and function unmistakably when conditions gather. (Parallel note: the same sūtra generalizes the point to birth/death and to the aggregates and sense-consciousnesses—stating they have “no producer,” do not come or go from anywhere, and are designated on conditions. This anticipates the Heart Sūtra’s triad negations.)

The Drum Analogy and Nāgārjuna’s Eight Negations (Applied Point-by-Point)

Nāgārjuna’s homage verse (MMK 1.1) encapsulates the Middle Way with eight “neither/nots”: neither cessation nor origination; neither annihilation nor permanence; neither coming nor going; neither difference nor identity—followed by “the pacification of conceptual proliferations (prapañcopaśama).” The drum thought-experiment from *The Questions of an Old Lady* (Toh 171) makes each negation concrete. When a drum is struck, “sound” is nowhere *in* the wood, hide, stick, or hand; it is designated in dependence on those conditions—“Because of these conditions, it is termed sound... It has no coming, it has no going.”

Below, each negation is shown to be a direct consequence of that unfindability plus dependent designation (cf. MMK 24:18: “Whatever is dependently arisen, that we declare to be emptiness; that is a dependent designation; just that is the Middle Way”).

1) Neither Arising (Unborn)

If “sound” were a self-existent thing, it would either exist before the strike (and thus not need to arise) or be wholly nonexistent (and could not be made to arise). But the text demonstrates the sound cannot be found in any basis (wood/hide/stick/hand) or apart from them. So what we call “arising” is just our *designation* when requisite

conditions converge—no self-standing “sound-entity” is produced. This is why, in Madhyamaka, thorough dependence is precisely what makes “production” empty.

2) Nor Cessation (Unceasing)

If nothing self-existent was ever *born*, nothing self-existent can *cease*. When vibrations die down, conditions that supported the designation “sound” dissolve; function ends, but no core “thing” perishes. This is “unceasing” in the same sense as “unborn”—the event was only ever a coreless, dependently designated appearance.

3) Nor Annihilation

“Annihilation” would mean a truly existent essence has been destroyed. But the sūtra makes plain that the so-called sound is empty of any findable essence—there is nothing *there* to annihilate. This avoids nihilism while still acknowledging that conventionally the hearing stops.

4) Nor Permanence

Equally, permanence is excluded. The sound’s very possibility depends on momentary conditions (tension, impact, air, hearing). Take away any one and there is no sounding. What relies on shifting supports cannot be an unchanging permanence.

5) Nor Coming

The text states explicitly: the sound does not dwell in wood, hide, stick, or hand—and it does not “come” from anywhere else either. “Because of these conditions, it is termed sound.” There is no entity traveling from a hidden locus into audibility. “Coming” is a projection imposed on a dependently designated event.

6) Nor Going

Likewise, when the sound fades, it does not “go” anywhere—no retreat into the wood, no departure to another realm. With conditions absent, the basis for that designation is gone. No “thing” departs. The verse’s “not going” is already spelled out in the drum passage.

7) Nor Difference (Without Distinction)

If sound were *different from* its conditions, it should be conceivable *without* them. But the analysis shows you cannot have “sound” apart from hide/wood/impact/air/hearing. Because the sound is inseparable from its enabling network, positing it as something over-and-above those supports is incoherent. Thus, not different.

8) Nor Identity (Without Identity)

If sound were simply *identical to* any condition (e.g., the hide), then the hide would *just be* sounding—even when unstruck. Or if “sound” were identical to the sum of conditions as a static whole, then the mere presence of drum, stick, and air—even without impact—would entail sounding. Neither follows. So “sound” is not identical with any part or static sum. Thus, not identical.

“Pacification of Conceptual Proliferation” (prapañcopaśama)

Having blocked the eight pairs of extremes through this single example, the homage concludes with prapañcopaśama—ending the mental habit that *reifies* events into self-standing entities with fixed metaphysical statuses (born/ceased, coming/going, same/different). The drum shows why those statuses never apply ultimately: the sound is only ever a *dependent designation* (upādāya-prajñapti) on a nexus of conditions (MMK 24:18). Seeing this, conceptual fabrications fall silent.

The Rainbow: Vivid Display and Luminous Knowing

The rainbow offers a brilliant visual parallel, illustrating the principle of vivid display that is nowhere stored. A rainbow appears as a dazzlingly precise and vibrant arc of colour, yet it has no substance or location. It requires a specific convergence of conditions: sunlight, water droplets suspended in the air, and an observer positioned at the correct angle (~42°); move slightly and ‘the rainbow’ is gone—there was never a ‘thing’ hiding anywhere to begin with. It never came from anywhere, isn't hidden in the droplets or the sun, and doesn't retreat to a secret place when it disappears. (On the ~42° geometry of primary rainbows, see NOAA SciJinks.)

While a scientific account lists these physical dependencies, it often overlooks the most crucial condition from an experiential standpoint: the radiance of our own mind. Without the knowing, sentient capacity of consciousness, the physical conditions could align perfectly, but there would be no experience of a rainbow. Thus, the radiant mind, or pristine consciousness, must be included as an indispensable condition for the dependent origination of the phenomenon as a known event.

This introduces a crucial complement to emptiness: luminosity (Pāli *pabhassara*, Skt. *prabhāsvara*). This quality does not refer to literal light, like that from a lamp, but to the pristine knowing quality of consciousness—the vivid, clear presence that is the very knowing of any experience (cf. AN 1.49–52: “Luminous, monks, is the mind…”). There is no knowingness apart from the vivid appearances themselves; the knowing is the appearing. Crucially, this pristine consciousness is not a separate, underlying substance or a "True Self." Just like the rainbow, this luminous knowing is itself empty of intrinsic existence. It is not a subjective cognition illuminating an objective appearance; rather, phenomena are realized to be the nondual, self-luminous display—and this very luminosity, too, is empty of own-nature. This is the inseparability of clarity and emptiness, recognizing that a separate subject and object never arose in the first place. The world of form is not a dull, empty void; it is a radiant, clear, and vivid display of our pristine consciousness, and our experiencing of it is this very luminosity.

The Eight Illusions: The Union of Appearance and Emptiness

To deepen this understanding, the Mahāyāna tradition employs the eight examples of illusion. (Traditional enumerations of these eight similes vary slightly across texts and lineages; see also the Foam Sutta, SN 22.95, for closely related imagery of insubstantiality.) These similes are not meant to suggest the world is "fake" but to train the mind to see that all phenomena are illusory. The distinction is crucial. To call something "fake" implies a binary opposition to something "real"—a counterfeit bill versus a genuine one, a hallucination versus a verifiable object. This view still operates within a framework that assumes a baseline of inherent, solid reality. To say phenomena are illusory, however, is far more subtle. An illusion, like a mirage, is not nothing; it appears vividly and functions conventionally (it can cause thirst and hope). But when its nature is investigated, it is found to be completely dependent on causes and conditions, empty of any findable, independent essence of its own. Thus, "illusory" affirms the conventional appearance while revealing its ultimate, empty, and non-arisen nature.

The *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* expresses this view directly, showing how bodhisattvas teach this very principle:

“On the other hand, bodhisattva great beings who practice the perfection of wisdom teach the Dharma to beings, [F.215.b] while abiding in the twofold emptiness—that is to say the emptiness of the unlimited and the emptiness of that which has neither beginning nor end—[and they say], ‘These three realms are empty. In them there are no physical forms, feelings, perceptions, formative predispositions, consciousness, sense fields, or sensory elements. They

are a dream, they are an echo, they are an optical aberration, they are a magical display, they are a mirage, and they are a phantom. In them there are no aggregates, sense fields, or sensory elements. In them there is no dream or viewer of dreams. There is no echo or hearer of echoes. There is no optical aberration or viewer of optical aberrations. There is no magical display or creator of magical displays. There is no mirage or viewer of mirages. There is no phantom or viewer of phantoms. All these phenomena are nonentities and of the essential nature of nonentity, but you perceive aggregates when there are no aggregates! You perceive sense fields when there are no sense fields! You perceive sensory elements when there are no sensory elements! Since all these phenomena arise erroneously from dependent origination, and have been grasped through the maturation of past actions, why else would you perceive the nonentity of all phenomena as entities?’”

Each example reveals how the luminous appearance of phenomena—their inseparable clarity and display—is inseparable from its unfindable, insubstantial nature. Furthermore, they point to the “emptiness of emptiness”—the profound realization that there is no hidden truth or void behind these appearances. The emptiness of emptiness just means that when you realize an entity is empty, then there is no longer an entity to be empty. This is a non-reductive insight; there is no emptiness as a nature left over in the end. Penetrating their emptiness leads one back to the surface of the everyday, revealing that all things have "one nature, that is, no nature."

1. **A Mirage:** In the desert, the vivid presence of shimmering water arises with powerful, functional clarity, dependently originating from conditions of superheated air, light, and a perceiving mind. This potent display is inseparable from its complete insubstantiality. When examined carefully, as the Buddha taught in the *Pheṇapiṇḍūpamasutta* (SN 22.95), the mirage appears completely vacuous, hollow, and insubstantial. For what core could there be in a mirage? The knowing of 'water' and the emptiness of water are not two; the vividness is the groundlessness. This reveals the emptiness of emptiness: there is no deeper truth of 'nothingness' hiding behind the mirage. The shimmering, deceptive surface is the entire groundless display of the event. Penetrating its emptiness simply returns us to the vivid, ungraspable appearance itself.
2. **The Moon's Reflection in Water:** The reflection is a perfect, radiant knowingness—clear, bright, and detailed. Its appearance is entirely dependent on a confluence of conditions: the celestial body we designate as "the moon," the reflective surface of the water, and the specific angle of the observer. After the initial realization of radiant knowingness, it is inevitable that one reifies it—first as a timeless, eternal witness or 'I AM', and hence deeper insight is needed. Even after the illusion of a separate knower is seen through, this radiant knowingness as a vivid display can still be mistaken for a truly existing, external world. It is only the subsequent, penetrating insight into the dependent origination and empty nature of all phenomena that reveals this very radiance to be, by its nature, completely illusory and empty of any findable core. The clarity of the reflection and its emptiness are inseparable. This logic applies all the way up: the "real moon" is also a dependently originated phenomenon. Thus, the reflection is an illusion of an illusion. Its ultimate nature is therefore 'no nature.' Realizing its emptiness doesn't reveal a void; it reveals the vivid, shimmering reflection as the complete, groundless presencing of that moment.
3. **A Dream:** The dream world is a totally immersive field of vivid presence—sights, sounds, and intense emotions feel completely real, arising in dependence on the sleeping mind and karmic traces. This immersive vividness is inseparable from its complete lack of a locatable essence. When examined upon waking, the entire

dream world is found to be hollow and insubstantial, for what core could there be in a dream? The presencing of the dream is its fundamental groundlessness. There is no ontological depth lurking beneath the dream's deceptive surface; the vivid, transient dream-world is the whole story, seen without the illusion of a solid ground beneath it.

4. **A Magical Illusion:** A magician's display conjures the potent display of a horse, so convincing it captivates the audience. This convincing presence dependently arises from the magician's skill, props, and the audience's perception, and is, by its very nature, unfindable. When examined carefully, the display is revealed to be vacuous and hollow, without any real substance. For what core could there be in a magic trick? The inseparable union of this vividness and its emptiness is what makes it illusory. Penetrating the illusion doesn't lead to a hidden truth, but back to the conventional world of the magician, the props, and the audience—the luminous and conventional surface of things.
5. **An Echo:** An echo manifests as a clear, distinct presence of sound, arising in dependence on an initial sound, a reflective surface, and a medium like air. This audible clarity is inseparable from its complete lack of an independent source. When examined closely, it is found to be hollow and insubstantial, for what core could there be in an echo? The knowing of the sound is its essenceless nature. The clear sound and its emptiness are not two. Realizing this, one finds that the echo's ultimate nature is simply its own audible, transient, and groundless appearing.
6. **A City of Gandharvas:** This atmospheric illusion appears as a grand, complex, and radiant knowingness, dependently arisen from clouds, light, and atmospheric conditions. This magnificent appearance is inseparable from its utter insubstantiality. When examined, it is seen to be completely vacuous and insubstantial, for what core could there be in a city in the clouds? Its vividness is its groundlessness. There is nothing beneath this deceptive surface; its vivid, illusory appearance is the whole of the event.
7. **A Phantom:** An apparition can appear with terrifying, vivid presence, its appearance dependent on certain mental or causal conditions. This powerful appearance is inseparable from its complete lack of any findable core. When examined, it is revealed to be hollow and insubstantial, for what core could there be in a phantom? The terror it may induce is not inherent to the phantom but arises from failing to recognize its empty, illusory nature. When its emptiness is seen, the vivid presence remains, but the fear, which depends on reification, dissolves. The knowing of the apparition and its groundlessness are a single, inseparable event.
8. **A Reflection in a Mirror:** The image in a mirror is a perfectly clear, precise, and radiant knowingness, dependently originated from your face, the mirror's surface, and light. When we investigate this vivid presence, we find that no inherent essence can be located, either in the appearance itself or in its clarity. When examined, the reflection is found to be completely vacuous and hollow, for what core could there be in a reflection? This inseparable union of a vivid, knowing appearance and an unfindable essence is what makes it illusory. To be ultimately empty is, ultimately, to lack emptiness. The reflection's nature is simply its own clear, dependent, and vivid appearing on the surface of the mirror.

Each of these examples hammers home the central point: all phenomena are illusory. Their luminous presence is not separate from their unfindable nature—the inseparable union of clarity and emptiness. Form is emptiness, emptiness is form. They are not two separate qualities but a single, indivisible display. They dependently arise as a vivid,

spontaneous presence; this appearance, when cognized conceptually, is a dependent designation, and this very appearing, this vivid knowingness, is its groundless, essenceless nature.

Deconstructing the Perceptual Triad: “No Eye... No Form... No Consciousness”

With this foundation, we can approach the *Heart Sūtra*'s most challenging passage. The *Heart Sūtra* (Toh 21) compresses this into a few strokes: “Form is emptiness; emptiness is form... in emptiness there is no eye, no ear... no mind; no ignorance and no end of ignorance... no attainment.” (84000). This sweeping negation is a concise and systematic deconstruction of the entire perceptual process, resolving the false dichotomy between mind and matter. (For a practice-driven unpacking, see the ATR posts "Mind, Matter, and the Middle Way" and "A Practitioner's Reflection on the Kōmyōzō Zanmai".)

The Sūtra's shorthand dismantles the entire perceptual triad by negating the inherent existence of each of its components:

1. **“No Sense Faculty” (no eye).** What makes a lump of tissue an eye? Only its relational function in a seeing-event. Take away either a visible form or the corresponding consciousness and it’s not functioning as an eye. So “eye” is dependently originated, and because it is so, it’s empty of any findable essence and is merely a dependent designation—a valid label based on conditions and functions, nothing intrinsic. (See SN 35.93 on contact as the meeting of the three.)
2. **“No Sense Object” (no form).** What is a "form"? As a visible form, it’s defined relationally—as what stands in the right relation to a visual faculty and a visual consciousness. Its object-of-sight-ness is not an intrinsic property, but designated dependently within the triad. Thus, as a perceived form, it’s empty and merely designated in dependence on the other two.
3. **“No Sense Consciousness” (no eye-consciousness).** Consciousness is always consciousness-of; it never arises “in a vacuum.” The Buddha states repeatedly that consciousness arises in dependence and “apart from a requisite condition there is no origination of consciousness” (MN 38). Hence it too lacks any independent core and is empty and dependently designated (we call it “eye-consciousness” precisely when eye and form converge).

Putting it together. The triad—faculty, object, consciousness—is a single, momentary, dependently arisen event (contact is “the meeting/convergence of these three,” SN 35.93). Because none of the three can be established on its own, the *Heart Sūtra* can say “no eye ... no form ... no eye-consciousness” in emptiness—it’s denying intrinsic nature, not everyday function. (A related early image is the “two sheaves of reeds” leaning against each other to illustrate mutual dependence—SN 12.67.) And Nāgārjuna clinches the logic:

“Whatever is dependently arisen—that we declare to be emptiness; that, being a dependent designation, is itself the Middle Way.” (MMK 24.18)

(Terminology note: It is crucial to distinguish this correct view of dependent origination (*pratītyasamutpāda*) from a reified "dependent existence" (*parabhāva*), a view Nāgārjuna refutes. "Dependent existence" mistakenly assumes that things *truly exist* by borrowing their essence from other conditions, which is just a subtle guise for inherent existence (*svabhāva*). For Nāgārjuna, dependence is not a real mode of existence; rather, *because* things are dependent, they are empty of any inherent nature and are thus merely conventional, or dependent, designations (*upādāya-prajñapti*). Our talk about them is valid convention, without reification.)

Yin Ling shared two years ago: “Buddha says, If this arise, that arise. If this cease, that cease. . I add- because of dependency, hence there is no this, nor that, to be pinpointed inherently. It’s empty. . John tan says, If bell, air , ear , consciousness , stick are needed to produce a sound, Where is the sound? Where? We cannot pinpoint it. . If you press on the table, The earth element is hard, Where is the hardness? Where? This arise, that arise, Lift up ur hand, This cease, that cease, Where is the hardness? In your hand? In the table? . He also says, If A always depend on B, and B always depend on A, We will not be able to pin down A or B. A and B is not two, nor one. It’s empty, It’s dependent origination! 😁 All the “self” and “thing” we feel are imputations, They are not there. Release them. Release till none . My short Singapore reflection Emptiness eating emptiness, All my own empty clarity 😊 ”

From Mental Releasing to the Heart of Radiance

The foregoing analysis of the drum, the perceptual triad, and the eight illusions provides the indispensable logical framework for understanding emptiness. It demonstrates how our conventional concepts—"self," "agent," "seer-seeing-seen," "mind," "body," and "phenomena"—are dependent designations, abstracted from the luminous flow of experience and lacking any inherent essence. This is a critical and liberating insight. However, if this understanding remains at the level of deconstructing concepts, it is what can be called a "mental level releasing" only. One might understand that reified mental and nominal constructs are empty, but this is freeing only at the mental level.

To illustrate this, we can examine the different phases of understanding emptiness through the classic analogy of the chariot. One might first understand emptiness in a manner like 'weather,' where 'weather' is merely an imputation upon a collection of phenomena like rain falling or the sun shining. This can be understood in terms of the emptiness of the imputed label, leaving the collection—the aggregates, the very manifest and vivid experience—"un-emptied." This is an incomplete view. A deeper understanding comes from applying the chariot analogy to all phenomena. As John Tan once remarked, "Don't keep thinking of aggregates as also empty. If you understand the chariot is empty, what is not empty?" The problem, however, is that the aggregates themselves do appear real unless one has had the direct realization that "name-only" or "empty" is, in fact, the vivid, appearing presence itself.

The crucial shift is from a conceptual understanding to a direct, experiential one. If we conceptualize a label like "chariot" and then think, "that labelled chariot is empty of essence," this remains an inferential analysis. The direct realization occurs when one sees that the empty "chariot" *is* the vivid, appearing presence. Emptiness is this very presence. The label or chariot that is empty is the vivid, appearing presence itself—as unfindable and shimmering as a mirage. It is not a mere mental label. Like any object you see—a handphone, a table, a car—that vivid presencing *is* the 'chariot'; it is a vivid, unfindable, appearing presence. That being so, there is no handphone, no pain, no suffering, and all the other negations in the *Heart Sūtra*. At this level of direct insight, it is the very unfindability, ungraspability, and referencelessness of empty luminosity—an appearing “absence.” "No weather" does not mean weather doesn't exist, but that the very vivid, empty appearing or presencing we call "rain falling" is nothing there, an appearing absence like a rainbow or a hologram. Emptiness is none other than form.

The deeper and more fundamental actualization, therefore, is to directly authenticate this "freedom" at the level of the phenomena themselves—at the level of vivid, appearing presence, or *radiance*. Without the direct recognition of

emptiness at this foundational level, the understanding of Nāgārjuna's Eight Negations cannot touch the "heart of radiance." The crucial obstruction to this direct authentication is the subtle, often unexamined assumption that "the mirror is not the reflection"—the belief that there is a real, underlying ground or substrate (the mirror) that is separate from the transient appearances that play across it (the reflections). Although one may experience the mental release of constructs at this level, everything may be subsumed into an overarching, substantialist and unchanging nondual awareness. We will still be attached to a changeless purity resisting change if understanding remains at the mental level, and the empty nature of radiance remains unpenetrated.

To go deeper, in addition to understanding that reified constructs are empty, we must contemplate further and ask ourselves: *how* can these conventions be reified in the first place, and then deconstructed later? The answer is that they are abstracted from the raw, radiant display of experience. Therefore, the inquiry must turn to the nature of radiance itself. This deeper inquiry might take the form of a koan-like contemplation: "How can this radiance, this vivid presence, change so effortlessly, so miraculously and seamlessly with differing conditions, if it has a solid core?" If this ever-changing display had a true, inherent nature, it would resist such fluid transformation. This leads to a profound shift in understanding: the very "changingness" of radiance is the direct authentication of no ultimate production and no ultimate cessation. The seamless flux of appearances is the living proof that no solid "thing" is ever truly born or truly dies.

Ultimately, this profound insight into the illusory and non-arisen nature of all phenomena transcends even the foundational Buddhist teaching of impermanence. The emphasis on impermanence serves as a vital and skillful means—a "raft"—to guide the mind away from grasping at permanence and toward the realization of no-self and emptiness. However, once phenomena are directly seen as illusory, the very conceptual framework of "permanent" versus "impermanent" is also released. As the *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra* advises, the ultimate practice involves not engaging with the notions that phenomena are permanent *or* impermanent, a self *or* not a self, empty *or* not empty. When practice becomes natural and spontaneous, one releases the raft of these Dharma seals and abides in the mind's ungraspable nature. This leads to a more subtle Mahāyāna understanding of "permanence" itself—not as an unchanging, real entity, but as that which, being unborn, is free from the causes of origination and cessation. However, it is crucial to understand that this "transience" or "changingness" of Dōgen’s “Impermanence is Buddha-Nature” is not a mere philosophical concept of impermanence/permanence to be intellectually understood or transcended. Rather, in the spirit of Zen masters like Dōgen, it is a direct pointing. It is an instruction to authenticate the Buddha-Nature directly *in and as* the very transient phenomena themselves—the mountains, the trees, the sunshine, the fleeting sound of footsteps—not in some transcendent, changeless awareness separate from the world. Even after the realization of “Impermanence is Buddha-Nature,” which is the realization of anātman, one must realize how dependent origination and the eight negations are directly pointing to the nature of radiance.

This insight allows the Eight Negations to be realized not as a philosophical conclusion, but as the direct taste of experience:

- **No Arising & No Cessation:** Where does the redness of a rose come from? Where does the sound of a bell go? The momentary and seamlessly dependent flash of radiant presence was never a real entity that was "born," so it cannot be an entity that "ceases."

- **No Permanence & No Annihilation:** The transient nature of every sight and sound is self-evident proof of no permanence. Because no "thing" was ever truly born, its passing is not the annihilation of an entity.
- **No Coming & No Going:** The radiant presence does not come from anywhere or go anywhere. It is a momentary, unlocatable, condition-dependent display.
- **No Identity & No Difference:** The redness is not different from the seeing of it, nor is it identical to the "rose-object." The dependently originated, non-dual and seamless nature of experience dissolves these conceptual fabrications.

When the view penetrates to this level, the understanding of emptiness is no longer a dry, mental negation. It is the direct recognition that the luminous, vivid, and ever-changing display of the world *is* its emptiness. This is the crucial breakthrough in view that contrasts a merely conceptual framework with the direct taste of the nature of radiance.

The Practical Path to Insight: From Luminous Mind to Emptiness

While the *Heart Sūtra* presents the ultimate view of emptiness, the experiential path to that view is crucial. In this commentary, I delineate a path that unfolds in phases, based on my interpretation of texts from the Zen tradition like the *Kōmyōzō Zanmai* (Treasury of Light).

Phase 1: The Foundational Realization of Luminous Presence ("I AM"). The essential first step is to realize the "luminous Mind" itself—the ever-present pure Presence and capacity of Knowingness that is the baseline fact of all experience. This provides the stable ground from which to explore the profound truth of non-duality and emptiness, even though Presence is still falsely reified as an eternal Witness at this stage.

An Intermediate Phase: Substantialist Nonduality ("One Mind"). Following the "I AM" realization, a practitioner often enters a profound non-dual state where all phenomena are seen as the display of a single, unified Mind. This is a powerful insight, but it can become a subtle trap as one continues to reify "Mind" as a truly existing, ultimate substance that is nondual with everything, or modulates as everything. This is a substantialist view and must be penetrated by the deeper wisdom of anātman, which reveals that this luminous knowing is itself dependently arisen and empty.

Phase 2: The Deepening Insight into Anātman and Emptiness. Once this luminous ground is realized, the path then turns the light of inquiry back upon itself.

- **Emptiness of Self (*pudgala-nairātmya*):** The practitioner investigates this luminous Mind and discovers it is empty of any inherent, independent self-nature (*svabhāva*). This is the direct, non-conceptual realization of agentlessness, often expressed in stanzas:
- There is thinking, no thinker
- There is hearing, no hearer
- There is seeing, no seer
- And furthermore:
  In thinking, just thoughts
- In hearing, just sounds
- In seeing, just forms, shapes and colors.

-
- **Emptiness of Phenomena (*dharma-nairātmya*):** The insight then deepens to perceive the empty, dream-like nature of all appearances.

This progression is vital. By first realizing the luminous, vivid nature of Mind and appearance, the subsequent insight into their emptiness does not lead to nihilism. Instead, one realizes that phenomena are like a rainbow: vividly apparent, yet utterly empty.

Scaling the Principle: From Drums to Buddhas

This principle scales universally. *The Ornament of the Light of Awareness* (Toh 100) uses the example of a cloud, stating, “the cloud is non-arisen and non-ceasing; free from coming and going.” Strikingly, it then applies this very same logic to the Tathāgata, whose appearance is for the benefit of beings yet is ultimately as non-arisen and unceasing as the cloud. (84000 translation; see the rain-cloud analogy.) This logic culminates in Nāgārjuna's famous verse: “Whatever is dependently arisen, we declare that to be emptiness; It is a dependent designation; Just that is the middle path” (MMK 24:18).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the *Heart Sūtra*’s wisdom is unlocked when we see that emptiness is not an absence but a dynamic potential. Because the drum’s sound is unfindable in any single part or apart from its conditions, its very emptiness is what allows it to manifest unfailingly as a luminous, dependently-designated display. Everything in our experience—from the sound of a drum to the luminous appearing of a mirage—functions on this same principle. However, to fully realize this requires penetrating the true meaning of dependent origination. A common, superficial understanding sees dependent arising merely as an explanation for how a seemingly solid, existing whole is constructed from its parts and conditions. This view, while a step away from naive realism, still subtly grasps at an inherent essence, a 'whole' that truly exists, reflecting the mind's deep-seated propensity to solidify experience.

The profound and correct understanding, as articulated by masters like Tsongkhapa, is that the radical dependence of a phenomenon on its parts and conditions reveals its complete lack of any findable core. Because no essence can be found, from an ultimate perspective, there is no true arising. What remains is a coreless, luminous appearance, like a hologram—vividly present yet utterly ungraspable. This is the true meaning of 'non-arising,' which is synonymous with dependent origination and emptiness. This unified insight is precisely what Tsongkhapa pointed to as the completion of the view. This point is powerfully underscored by John Tan's reflection on Tsongkhapa's insight: "This is perhaps the most important point for me post anatta insight. so profound and deep. 🙏 You must see not only from freedom from elaborations but dependent arising." Tsongkhapa explained that as long as the understanding of appearance (the regulated world of dependent origination) and the understanding of emptiness (the absence of all standpoints) remain separate, the Sage's intent has not been realized. The analysis is complete only when, in a single moment, the perception of undeceiving dependent origination dismantles all grasping at inherent existence. Furthermore, this unified view is the true Middle Way. As Tsongkhapa wrote, appearance, correctly seen, dispels the extreme of existence, while emptiness dispels the extreme of nonexistence. One understands how emptiness itself functions as cause and effect, and is thus freed from all extreme views.

By first grounding ourselves in the direct realization of luminous presence, we provide an experiential foundation for the profound view of emptiness. This initial authentication of presence ensures that the subsequent deconstruction of reality does not lead to a nihilistic misunderstanding. When emptiness is approached from this ground of vivid,

knowing presence, it is not mistaken for a mere conceptual negation or a sterile void. Instead, we can then safely and profoundly realize the truth to which the Sūtra points: that all phenomena, including the mind itself, are unborn and unceasing. This is not an erasure of the world, but the revelation of its true, magical nature: a vivid, functional, and radiant display, utterly free of any solid, findable core.

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- *The Perfection of Wisdom, The Heart Sūtra*. Toh 21. 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. (“Form is emptiness… in emptiness: no eye… no mind… no attainment.”)
- *The Ornament of the Light of Awareness That Enters the Domain of the Tathāgatas*. Toh 100. 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. (Cloud/Tathāgata non-arising, “free from coming and going.”)
- Nāgārjuna. *Mūlamadhyamakakāri-kā* (MMK) 24:18. (Dependent arising = emptiness = dependent designation ∗upa¯da¯ya–prajn~apti∗.)
- *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (SN) 35.93. Contact defined as the meeting/convergence of faculty, object, and consciousness.
- SN 12.67. “Two sheaves of reeds” simile for mutual dependence.
- *Majjima Nikāya* (MN) 38. “Apart from a requisite condition, there is no origination of consciousness.” (Refutation of a transmigrating, selfsame consciousness.)
- *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AN) 1.49–52. “Luminous is the mind” passages; luminosity as baseline capacity, not an uncaused essence.
- SN 22.95 (*Pheṇapiṇḍūpamasutta* / Foam Sutta). Aggregates likened to foam, bubble, mirage, plantain trunk, and a magic trick—insubstantiality imagery.

References (secondary & explanatory)

- “Mind, Matter, and the Middle Way.” Awakening to Reality.
- “A Practitioner’s Reflection on the Kōmyōzō Zanmai.” Awakening to Reality.
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- Rigpa Shedra Wiki. “Eight Similes of Illusion.” (Overview of enumerations.)

(Terminology: *śūnyatā*; Pāli *pabhassara* / Skt. *prabhāsvara* for “luminosity”; *upādāya-prajñapti* = dependent designation.)

Labels: Dependent Origination, Emptiness |

“The weight of thoughts -- Part 1

When contemplating, do not just let our contemplation remain as a mental reasoning exercise. For example:

What appears is neither "internal" nor "external". For the notion of "internality" is dependent on the notion of "externality", without either, the sense of neither can arise.

Do not just let our contemplation remain at this level. If we do that, at most the freedom will simply remain at the mental level -- merely a pellucid, pure and clean state. It is no different from practicing raw attention although insight on how conceptualities proliferate the mind may arise.

But go further to relate directly to our sensations, thoughts, smells, colors, tastes, sounds and ask:
"What do we mean by thoughts are neither inside nor outside our head?"

Seeing through this will be much more penetrating. It will bring a deep sense of illusoriness and mystical awe as a real-time lived-experience into our entire body mind.” – John Tan, 2022

“The weight of thoughts -- Part 2

How heavy are thoughts?

Where are their roots?

It is not uncommon to hear in the spiritual circle phrases like "the 'I' is just a thought" or "thought is empty and spacious, there is no weight or root to it".

While the rootlessness and the space-like nature of "thoughts" should be pointed out, one must not be misled into thinking they have seen through "anything" much less up-rooted the deeply seated conceptual notions of "I/mine", "body/mind", "space/time"...etc.

So emphasis must also be placed on the other side of the coin. "Thoughts" are astonishingly heavy like a black-hole (size of a pinhole, weight of a star); the roots of conceptual notions" they carry permeate our entire being and everywhere.

The "roots" of thoughts are no where to be found also means they can be found anywhere and everywhere, spreaded across the 3 times and 10 directions -- in modern context, over different time-lines across the multiverse. In other words, "this arises, that arises".”

John Tan said to someone years ago, "Jhanas imo is needed for a start, when the mind is unstable and when concentration isn't strong, it is not easy to see through reification.

Post anatta, practice should be spacious and natural, open and free. Once we recognize the nature of what appears is empty and non-arisen, primordially pure and free from all elaborations, we must mature and stabilize these 2 insights. Gradually, our entire body-mind will be transformed into an oceanic samadhi of rainbow and mirage like spaciousness, not just simply non-dual and transparent vivid radiance."

“Jamgon Mipham:

Accordingly, in the case of a beginner, it is possible for mere nonexistence (med rkyang tsam), the negation of truly existent phenomena, to arise as a mental object. But a person whose Madhyamaka investigation has hit the mark will perfectly distinguish the difference between the lack of inherent existence and mere nonexistence; **and will be quite certain that a phenomenon's lack of inherent existence is inseparable from its dependent arising**. Such an extraordinary mode of apprehension indeed acts as an antidote to the precipitous extremes of both substantialism and nihilism. For as long as, according to one's mode of apprehension, one is either refuting things or establishing them, one is not actually in the nature beyond all conceptual extremes. When, with reasoned analysis, one arrives at the certainty that phenomena do not dwell in any of the four extremes, and when one settles evenly in the dharmadhatu, by way of the self-cognizing primordial wisdom, this will have the power to dispel all conceptual constructs. Thus one will gain confidence in ultimate reality, in 'which there are no misconceptions to dispel and no progress to make. One will have confidence in the genuine meaning of "freedom from mental activity" as explained in the Prajnaparamita-sutra.”

Those who realize that all entities are dependently arisen and,
Just like a moon that appears in a pool of water,
Are neither true nor false,
Are not carried away by philosophical dogmas.

~ Nagarjuna, in Sixty Verses on Reasoning

“In reality there is neither form nor seer, neither sound nor hearer; there is neither smell, nor one who smells, neither taste nor taster; neither touch nor one who touches, neither thought nor thinker.” – Hevajratantra

Dzogchen text Unwritten Tantra as translated by Acarya Malcolm (see: Clarifications on Dharmakaya and Basis by Loppön Namdrol/Malcolm www.awakeningtoreality.com/2014/02/clarifications-on-dharmakaya-and-basis_16.html):

'Apparent yet non-existent retinue, listen well! There is no object to distinguish in me, the view of self-originated wisdom; it did not exist before, it will not arise later, and also does not appear in anyway in the present. The path does not exist, action does not exist, traces do not exist, ignorance does not exist, thoughts do not exist, mind does not exist, prajñā does not exist, samsara does not exist, nirvana does not exist, vidyā itself does not even exist, totally not appearing in anyway.'

Malcolm:

Malcolm wrote many years ago:

“...At base, the main fetter of self-grasping is predicated upon naive refication of existence and non-existence. Dependent origination is what allows us to see into the non-arising nature of dependently originated phenomena, i.e. the self-nature of our aggregates. Thus, right view is the direct seeing, in meditative equipoise, of this this non-arising

nature of all phenomena. As such, it is not a "view" in the sense that is something we hold as concept, it is rather a wisdom which "flows" into our post-equipoise and causes us to truly perceive the world in the following way in Nagarjuna's Bodhicittavivarana:

"Form is similar to a foam,
Feeling is like water bubbles,
Ideation is equivalent with a mirage,
Formations are similar with a banana tree,
Consciousness is like an illusion.""

....

“People like to believe the ultimate is something, even if that something is inexpressible. Since in Buddhadharma there is no ultimate apart from the relative, emptiness is only hard to understand for those who wish there to be some permanent, ultimate something which is not dependently originated. Awakening in Buddhadharma comes from understanding the ultimate nature (emptiness) of relative phenomena (dependent origination). There is nothing to realize other than this.”

- Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2018

[11:02 am, 02/10/2021] John Tan: [Someone asked] Another is in what is meant by in hearing, there is no sound.
[11:05 am, 02/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: usually its referring to advaita realisation of i am or one mind.. unless it is buddhist [twofold] emptiness, then no hearing and no sound
“In reality there is neither form nor seer, neither sound nor hearer; there is neither smell, nor one who smells, neither taste nor taster; neither touch nor one who touches, neither thought nor thinker.” – Hevajratantra
[11:05 am, 02/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: how did you answer
[11:15 am, 02/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: advaita always talk about awareness as invisible, inaudible, formless, so on and so forth
[11:15 am, 02/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: that is just I AM
[11:15 am, 02/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: a higher realisation is rupert spira, awareness is never invisible but always visible, it is objects that are not seen. but that is still one mind to no mind
[11:15 am, 02/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: not anatta

“Primordially Unborn
[8:10 PM, 6/13/2020] John Tan: Yeah 👍[8:15 PM, 6/13/2020] John Tan: Be no center, no background. Spontaneous, non dual and non local.

Soh, 2023: I like this sutra a lot that I printed out.

John Tan, 2023: 👍This [sutra] is actually very good.

https://read.84000.co/translation/toh171.html

The Bhagavān replied, “Sister, birth does not come from anywhere. Aging does not come from anywhere. They do not go anywhere. Sister, sickness does not come from anywhere. Death does not come from anywhere. They do not go anywhere. Sister, form does not come from anywhere. Sensation, notions, formative factors and consciousness do not come from anywhere. They do not go anywhere. Sister, the earth element does not come from anywhere. The water element, the fire element, the wind element, the space element and the element of consciousness do not come from anywhere. They do not go anywhere. Sister, the eye does not come from anywhere. The ear, the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind do not come from anywhere. They do not go anywhere.

“Sister, it is as follows: as an analogy, a fire arises based on a stick to rub with, a stick to rub on, and and also a person’s effort to generate it. That fire, moreover, once it has burnt the grass and wood, will have no more causes and will die. Sister, where do you think the fire comes from and where does it go?”

She answered, “O Bhagavān, that fire comes into being owing to the power of a collection of causes. It ceases and dies when it lacks the collection of causes.”

The Bhagavān said, “Sister, likewise, all phenomena [F.311.b] come into being owing to the power of a collection. They cease and die when they lack the collection. Whatever the phenomena, they do not come from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere. Sister, it is as follows: although the eye consciousness arises based upon the eye and form, the eye consciousness does not have a producer, nor anything that makes it cease. Nowhere is it brought together at all. The aggregates do not come from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere. When one has accumulated karma through the conditions of the consciousnesses, the fruits manifest as the results of three types1 in the three realms. That fruit is empty too. It has no coming. It has no going. No one makes it arise. It is not stopped by anybody. Sister, all phenomena have stopped due to their very natures.

“Likewise, although the mental consciousness arises based upon the ear and sound, the nose and smell, the tongue and taste, the body and touch, and the mind and phenomena, the mental consciousness2 does not have a producer nor has it anything that makes it cease. Nowhere is it brought together at all.3 The aggregates do not come from anywhere, nor do they go anywhere either. When one has accumulated karma through the condition of mental consciousness, the fruits manifest as the results of three types in the three realms. That fruit is empty too. It has no coming. It has no going. No one makes it arise. It is not stopped by anybody. Sister, all phenomena are inherently stopped.

- Mahallikāparipṛcchā (Toh 171, Degé Kangyur, vol. 59, folios 310.b–314.a.)

“Sister, it is as follows: as an analogy, the sound of a drum arises based on wood, hide and a stick, and also on a person’s effort to make it arise. The past sound of that drum was empty, the future sound will be empty and the sound that arises at present is empty. The sound does not dwell in the wood, neither does it dwell in the hide, nor does it dwell in the stick, nor does it dwell in the person’s hand. However, because of these conditions, it is termed sound. That which is termed sound is also empty. It has no coming. It has no going. No one makes it arise. It is not stopped by anybody.

Sister, all phenomena are inherently stopped.

“Sister, likewise, all phenomena depend solely on conditions, i.e., ones such as ignorance, craving, karma and consciousness. When these latter phenomena are present, the terms death and birth are designated. [F.312.a] That which is designated death and birth is also empty. It has no coming. It has no going. No one makes it arise. It is not stopped by anybody. Sister, all phenomena are inherently stopped.

“Sister, in this way, whoever understands the nature of a drum’s sound well also understands emptiness well. Whoever understands emptiness well, understands nirvāṇa well. Whoever understands nirvāṇa well has no attachment to any entity, and despite designating conventional things with all sorts of terms—‘this is mine,’ or ‘that is me,’ or ‘sentient being,’ or ‘life force,’ or ‘living being,’ or ‘man,’ or ‘person,’ or ‘born of Manu,’ or ‘son of Manu,’ or ‘agent,’ or ‘inciter of action,’ or ‘appropriator,’ or ‘discarder’—he teaches Dharma without attachment to these. He teaches Dharma well. He teaches the final reality. He teaches the final reality well.

- Mahallikāparipṛcchā (Toh 171, Degé Kangyur, vol. 59, folios 310.b–314.a.)”

“Mañjuśrī, whenever not much rain falls from the atmosphere and the sky above, all the sentient beings in Jambūdvīpa think, ‘Here there is not a cloud.’ But when, Mañjuśrī, a lot of rain falls on the great earth from the atmosphere and the sky above, they say: ‘Oh, a great cloud [F.282.b] is pouring down water, satisfying the great earth.’

“However, Mañjuśrī, when this happens there is neither a cloud, nor anything that can be designated as a cloud. Mañjuśrī, a large mass of water is generated by the wind, and then it falls from the atmosphere above. Mañjuśrī, the mass of water disappears in the atmosphere itself, due to the ripening of sentient beings’ previous karma. [42]

“Mañjuśrī, that cumulus of water above in the atmosphere, stirred by the wind and releasing water, is designated a cloud due to the maturation of sentient beings’ previous karma. However, Mañjuśrī, no cloud can be found there, nor anything that could be designated a cloud. Mañjuśrī, the cloud is non-arisen and non-ceasing; it does not enter the way of mind, and it is free from coming and going.

“In the same way, Mañjuśrī, for bodhisattva great beings who have accumulated previous roots of what is wholesome; for other sentient beings who wish for the awareness of a hearer or a pratyekabuddha; and for those sentient beings who have accumulated roots of what is wholesome and possess the causes to be shown the path to nirvāṇa, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Perfect and Complete Buddha with unobstructed brilliance comes to be counted as arisen in the world.

“Whatever he says is thus (tathā), undistorted, thus and not otherwise. Therefore, he was given the name Tathāgata among gods and men. [44] Mañjuśrī, this word appears among gods and men: Tathāgata. However, Mañjuśrī, there is no Tathāgata to be found. The Tathāgata, Mañjuśrī, is not a sign, and he is free from signs. [F.283.a] He is not placed

in any of the primary or intermediate directions. He is unreal, non-arisen, and non-ceasing.

“On the other hand, Mañjuśrī, the appearance of the Tathāgata satisfies and entertains this world, including the gods, through the Dharma. And then, due to the ripening of previous karma of beginner bodhisattvas and immature, ordinary people who are guided by means of nirvāṇa, it appears that the Tathāgata is no more to be seen. They think, ‘The Tathāgata has passed into complete nirvāṇa.’ However, Mañjuśrī, the Tathāgata neither arises nor ceases. The Tathāgata, Mañjuśrī, is non-arisen and non-ceasing. Mañjuśrī, the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Perfect and Complete Buddha is primordially in complete nirvāṇa.

“Mañjuśrī, when some water is taken as a point of reference for an unreal cloud that has not arisen nor ceased, and is non-existent, the designation ‘cloud’ is established in the world. In the very same way, Mañjuśrī, when the teaching of the Dharma is taken as a point of reference for an unreal tathāgata who has not arisen nor ceased, and who is non-existent and primordially unborn, the designation ‘the Tathāgata, the Arhat, the Perfect and Complete Buddha’ becomes established in the world. [46]

- The Ornament of the Light of Awareness that Enters the Domain of All Buddhas (Toh 100, Degé Kangyur, vol. 47, folios 276.a–305.a.)
Labels: Dependent Origination, Emptiness, Mahayana, Non-Arising 0 comments | |

https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/03/my-favourite-sutra-non-arising-and.html

My Favourite Sutra, Non-Arising and Dependent Origination of Sound
Also see: Non-Arising due to Dependent Origination
Soh Wei Yu
.
Shared with Your friends
As I said before this is like one of my favourite sutra.
Sound is empty and merely designated like chariot, D.O. and empty, has no coming nor going nor a producer, cannot be found in the parts or conditions nor apart from them.

https://read.84000.co/translation/toh171.html

[snipped, same sutra as above]

Yin Ling
Oh this is so good!

Reply

15h

André A. Pais

I'm reminded of Stian's "knock-sound" experiment. Knocking on the table, sound appears: but where is it?

Is it in the fingers? In the wood? In the air? In the eardrum or the mind? Is it in the space accommodating all this? In the temporal series expressing this activity?

Sound is nowhere to be found, and yet it is vividly present. It lies not in any of the individual conditions, but if a single one of them is removed, sound does not manifest. It arises from nothing in specific, and yet it exists inseparable from all. Ultimately, the whole universe is embodied in this knock-sound movement, but in the whole universe never is it found.

It's like the fresh-looking water in a mirage. It is so obviously there - a tired wanderer will spend his last sliver of energy dragging his hurt feet over burning sand to taste that deliciously-looking water. And yet, there is not one atom's worth of water in the mirage.

The absolute absence of water is perfectly aligned with and inseparable from the appearance of fresh and vibrant water. The emptiness of water is none other than the form of water.

Sound is like the water in a mirage. It is as gloriously present as it is unfathomably absent. It is the entire field of causes and conditions, stretching all space and time, and yet magically abiding and resting nowhere.

All causes and conditions are like this. All effects. All reality - space, time, self, other, mind, matter, world. All is gloriously present, vibrant and poignant; all is mysteriously absent, unfindable and ungraspable.

Stian Gudmundsen Høiland

....

Yin Ling

.

Dependent arising and non-arising.

.. Is a most important concept in Buddhism to understand. The nature of all “things” or mind can be understood only when we understand non-arising.

Most when explain dependent origination, or dependent arising, explain the contributions of causes and conditions, parts, towards the EXISTENCE of a whole, towards the existence of an inherent event. They still see the whole car 🚗 , they still see the whole person, with an essence, with a core. That is still not good enough.

This is just the very start and basic teaching of understanding causes and conditions, but not yet the true intent of the Blessed one.

This way of seeing essence / existence also reflects the deep grasping of our mind on Inherency, our minds always to want to pin something down, have something to wrap around, to solidify. Can you feel that tendency? The propensity of wanting to see the existence of a whole is so hypnotising... so much so that we are not able to be freed of the root that propels our cyclic existence - the grasping mind onto Inherency- that is the root.

Also, Understanding dependent arising this way, we will not be able to transcend birth and death. We won’t be able to explain rebirth clearly. There will be contradictions in our thought process.

However, if one understands when a thing is dependent on causes and conditions, on parts, on the consciousness that apprehends and conceptualises it, when that “thing” is shred to pieces like that, there is no one true thing there with an ESSENCE, there is no true arising.
There is only a coreless appearance.
Like a hologram.
No essence. Nothing to grasp.
This is what is meant by “non-arising”.
It is the true meaning of dependent origination.
It is emptiness.
There is Not an inherent thing, not an inherent process, not an inherent mind, not an inherent world, nothing inherent, only dependent arising.
When we see clearly like that, our mind has nothing to wrap around, our mind cannot pin something down..
When asked, where is the car? The mind is stunted by this question because if it looks, it cannot pin “CAR” in its part, in the people who make the car, or even in the consciousness that apprehend it. Where is the car?
Understanding dependent arising or dependent origination this way,
from there we can see non-arising,
Hence non-abiding
And non-cessation.
What is there to arise, abide or cease?
Then one can understand the heart sutra’s intent of “all dharmas are empty, there is no birth, no death, no stain, no stainlessness, no increase, no decrease”.（是诸法空相，不生不灭，不垢不净，不增不减）
You will also understand why the 6th patriarch Hui Neng in his reply poem says :
”There is nothing truly there,
Where can dust alight?”
(本来无一物，何处惹尘埃）
You will be able to understand Nargajuna 8 negations dedicatory verses to the Buddha in his monumental “Fundamental wisdom of the middle way”:
I prostrate to the Perfect Buddha,
The best of teachers,
who taught that
Whatever is dependently arisen is
Unceasing, unborn,
Unannihilated, not permanent,
Not coming, not going,
Without distinction, without identity,
And free from conceptual construction.
Then you can understand Tsongkhapa’s 3 principle of the path , his saying about one’s analysis is only complete after one sees both dependent origination and emptiness as complementary and not separate.

Then there is no separate 2 truths.
And we understand nature of reality. Just that.
And you will eventually with repetitive seeing sees nirvana, unleash the mind from many lifetimes of grasping to true existence , and stop suffering so much 🙏
May all sincere practitioners be able to see clearly with wisdom and liberate. 🙏

“Non-arisen means although there is vivid display, the appearances cannot be found anywhere. Like an optical illusion that appears does not truly exist cannot be said to have originated -- it was never there in the first place. All dependent originated are like that.” – John Tan, 2020

Although the emptiness of all phenomena (as opposed to emptiness of merely persons and subjective self/soul/agent) is emphasized in Mahayana Buddhism, I can assure you that it is also taught in the Pali canon.

“Pali Canon Verses on the Emptiness of All Phenomena (Dharmas)

Kaccayanagotta Sutta is a discourse on Right View and the Middle Way. Nagarjuna quoted Kaccayanagotta Sutta in his work Fundamental Verses on the Middle Way:

> “Everything exists”: That is one extreme.
> “Everything doesn’t exist”: That is a second extreme.
> Avoiding these two extremes,
> The Tathagata teaches the Dhamma via the middle. – Kaccayanagotta Sutta

Other than that, there are numerous Pali canon texts that point out the emptiness of all phenomena:

Kyle Dixon posted:

level 4
krodha
· 2 days ago · edited 2 days ago

Not by the Buddha.

I’m not sure who told you that. The Buddha states clearly in the *Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta SN 22.95:*

Form is like a lump of foam; feeling is like a bubble; perception seems like a mirage; choices like a banana tree; and consciousness like a magic trick: so taught the Kinsman of the Sun. However you contemplate them, examining them carefully, they’re void and hollow when you look at them closely. Concerning this body, he of vast wisdom has taught that when three things are given up, you’ll see this form discarded. Vitality, warmth, and consciousness: when they leave the body, it lies there tossed aside, food for others, mindless. Such is this process, this illusion, cooed over by fools. It’s said to be a killer, for no substance is found here.

And *Udānavarga 2.18:*

He who has perceived that this body is (empty) as a vase, and who knows that all things (dharma) are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death. He who has perceived that this world is like froth, and who knows that all things are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death. He who has perceived that this body is like froth, and who knows that all things are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death.

And *SA 265:*

Monks, it is just as if a master magician or the disciple of a master magician at a crossroads creates the magical illusion of an elephant troop, a horse troop, a chariot troop, and an infantry troop, and a clear-sighted person carefully examines, attends to, and analyses it. At the time of carefully examining, attending to, and analysing it, he finds that there is nothing in it, nothing stable, nothing substantial, it has no solidity. Why is that? It is because there is nothing solid or substantial in a magical illusion.

And then obviously Śākyamuni is even more liberal with the use of “illusion” in describing the nature of phenomena in the prajñāpāramitā and the Vajrayāna tantras, namely the Guhyasamāja and Kalācākra which are his teachings.

6

Labels: Buddha, Emptiness, Theravada 0 comments | | ”

“👍

-->Apart from what is compounded—utterly unrelated to it—how can the uncompounded be discerned? Thus the compounded establish the uncompounded.

Indeed and well said. Since the uncompounded has no parts, no causes and conditions and are the cessation of conceptualization (2 cessations), how can the uncompounded be discerned (conceptually) apart from the compounded. Therefore thorough knowledge of the compounded is needed to understand the uncompounded.

Mmk chapter 7 analysis of the 3 characteristics of arising, abiding and ceasing is similar to your unborn post during your birthday:-

Being does not arise, since it exists. Non-being does not arise, since it does not exist. As both being and non-being do not arise, the sum of them therefore do not arise. Consequently they do not endure or vanish.

Also the mind mistakes "something has arisen" from aggregation of parts. For compounded parts to be conceived as a unitary phenomenon, conventional designation for the aggregation of the parts is needed. As such compounded phenomena can only have conventional existence. But the whole "does not arise" from the parts, the whole is "merely designated" on the basis of its parts, nothing has truly arisen.

-->Thus all are dependently arisen; empty of nature, the stilling of thought.

Indeed.” – John Tan, 2021,
https://www.facebook.com/groups/1206265356138924/permalink/3845949748837125/

“Sort of true, but you may want to review the teaching on the sevenfold reasoning of the chariot which originated from the Buddha’s (Soh’s correction: Mara’s) discussion with the arahant Vajira in the Vajira Sutta, and then was expanded upon by Candrakīrti.

For example the cake is an inferential convention that is attributed to a collection of factors, but it is not found within those factors, nor created by those factors. The same goes for any entity or identity.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

Jayson MPaul
5m ·
I have been noticing the link between anatta emptiness of self and how it is exactly the same insight for emptiness of objects recently. Yesterday I was reading comments about the weather analogy, which was instrumental in my anatta insight. It suddenly became clear how that also applies to all objects, but not only that, how it applies to my direct experience. I saw that all these fleeting sensations and changing visual impressions were being held in the mind like weather, as though it was a real thing. That knot unravelled itself and everything in direct contact was seen to be this way. It felt as if the sensations had already been disconnected from a supposed this side and now they were detached from a supposed that side. The whole thing is an apparition, dream-like in nature. Really nothing to worry about here.

Данила Игнатовски
Do you mean that whether is just a label and it only exist like empty word, just a pointer to clouds, for example? Also then clouds doesn't exist itself bc it just water and water doesn't have inherent existence bc it just pointer to... Etc. And in the end we found only empty emptiness. 🙂
Do you talk about this stuff? Like all aggregation stuff is doesn't exist on its own as well as I'm.

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Reply

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Jayson MPaul
Author
Данила Игнатовски exactly. I've seen the recursive nature of emptiness deconstructing my concepts before. This was a deepening and the release of a deeply held belief that sensations were attributed to something on that side. Even after

seeing this there is a period of subtler and subtler assumptions coming up and being dispelled. Releasing mental constructs frees up so much energy to just be the dancing sensations instead of observing them.

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Reply

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Soh Wei Yu
Admin

John Tan commented:
There are 3-fold understanding to it post anatta. It is related to https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../daniel-post-on...
This is similar to the chariot analogy. But what is crucial in this analogy is how the "chariot" is understood. It can be from non-gelug perspective or the gelug perspective.
For the non-gelug, it is understood simply as a designation mistaken as "real" and we should eliminate all conceptualities into freedom from all elaborations, i.e, recognize the primordial purity, ka dag of phenomena. In this case reified constructs are treated more like non-existence instead of non-arisen. Then there is a need to point to the unfailing appearances and emphasized the union of emptiness and appearances. So there are 3 vital steps and insights:
1. Recognizing the primordial purity - ka dag (emptiness)
2. Realize that appearances unfailingly appears despite thorough negation (non-implicative)
3. Union of 1 emptiness + 2 appearances. Mipham coined it as "coalescence".
For the gelug, chariot is non-arisen instead of non-existence. They see the purpose of analysing the "chariot" with the 7 fold reasoning is to understand the dream-like nature of phenomena/appearances are like the designation of chariot.
Imo the 3 vital points are all included in this understanding as gelug treats all cognitions as "conceptual" including direct sense perceptions.

禅

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Daniel's Post on Anatta/Emptiness
Daniel's Post on Anatta/Emptiness

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- .

Reply

- .

Remove Preview

- · 5m
-
- Kyle Dixon shared before:
-

Kyle Dixon wrote two weeks ago:

Nāgārjuna states the following:

That which comes into being from a cause, and does not endure without conditions, it disappears as well when conditions are absent - how can this be understood to exist?

Going on to say:

Since it comes to and end when ignorance ceases; why does it not become clear then that it was conjured by ignorance?

This is the actual meaning, and the heart of dependent origination, which is nonarising [anutpāda]. For an object to inherently exist it must exist outright, independent of causes and conditions, independent of attributes, characteristics and constituent parts. However, we cannot find an inherent object independent of these factors, and the implications of this fact is that we likewise cannot find an inherent object within those factors either.

The object itself, as the core entity which possesses characteristics, is ultimately unfindable. We instead only find a designated collection of pieces, which do not in fact create any discrete object. In the absence of an object the pieces are likewise rendered as incapable of being "pieces" or "parts" and therefore they are also nothing more than arbitrary designations that amount to nothing more than inferences.

This means that all entities, selves, and so on are merely useful conventional designations, their provisional validity is only measured by their efficacy, and apart from that conventional imputation, there is no underlying object that can be ascertained or found.

Dependent origination is the apparent origination of entities that seem to manifest in dependence on causes and conditions. But as Nāgārjuna states above, those causes and conditions are actually the ignorance which afflicts the

mindstream, and the conditions of grasping, mine-making and I-making which are the drivers of karmic activity that serve to reify the delusion of a self, or a self in objects, and so on.

This is why many adepts are explicitly clear that dependent origination is synonymous with a lack of origination [anutpāda], because phenomena that originate in dependence on ignorance as a cause, never actually originate at all, for example, Candrakīrti states:

The perfectly awakened buddhas proclaimed, "What is dependently originated is non-arisen.”

Or Mañjuśrī:

Whatever is dependently originated does not truly arise.

Nāgārjuna once again:

What originates dependently is non-arisen!

Thus dependent origination is incapable of producing existence of any sort, because dependent origination is incapable of producing entities. Entities and existence only appear because of the ignorance which afflicts your mind. When that ignorance is removed, all perceptions of existence are removed, all perceptions of selves are removed and all perceptions of origination are removed.

- John Tan shared something I posted on AtR by Kyle Dixon:

  https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../kyle-dixon-on...

  Kyle dixon:

  The middle way is actually a freedom from the misconceptions of existence and non-existence. Holding that things exist (whether they are conditioned or unconditoned phenomena) is eternalism, holding that things do not exist (whether they are conditioned or unconditioned) is nihilism. Annihilationism is the belief that something existent becomes non-existent.

  The way to avoid these various extremes is emptiness, which means (i) a lack of inherent existence, (ii) a freedom from extremes, (iii) a lack of arising [non-arising], (iv) dependent co-origination. All of those definitions being synonymous.

  Dependent origination is the proper relative view which leads one to the realization of the ultimate view; which is emptiness. Many people misunderstand emptiness to be a negative view, but it is actually the proper middle way view which avoids the extremes of existence, non-existence, both and neither.

  All in all there is really no way to ELI5 with this topic, you'll just have to ask questions. It is simple once understood, but very, very few people actually understand dependent origination.

  Here is a collection of stuff I wrote awhile ago on dependent origination for the sake of the discussion:

the general definition of independent origination, the very idea that things are endowed with their own-being/essence [svabhāva], or self [ātman]. In order for something to be independently originated it would have to be unconditioned, independent and uncaused, but this is considered an impossibility in the eyes of Buddhism. The correct conventional view for emptiness is that of dependent origination, and so we see that in order to have objects, persons, places, things and so on, they must possessed of causes and conditions. Meaning they cannot be found apart from those causes and conditions. If the conditions are removed, the object does not remain.

The adepts of the past have said that since a thing only arises due to causes, and abides due to conditions, and fails in the absence of cause and condition, how can this thing be said to exist? For an object to inherently exist it must exist outright, independent of causes and conditions, independent of attributes, characteristics and constituent parts. However we cannot find an inherent object independent of these factors, and the implications of this fact is that we likewise cannot find an inherent object within those factors either. The object 'itself' is unfindable. We instead only find a designated collection of pieces, which do not in fact create anything apart from themselves, and even then, the parts are also arbitrary designations as well, for if there is no inherently existent object, there can be no inherent parts, characteristics or attributes either. Therefore the object is merely a useful conventional designation, and its validity is measured by its efficacy, apart from that conventional title however, there is no underlying inherent object to be found.

Dependent origination is pointing to a species of implied interdependency; the fact that an allegedly conditioned 'thing' only arises via implication from the misperception of other conditioned things, and so each 'thing' is simultaneously a cause and an effect of each other, and everything else. Dependent origination isn't a case in which we have truly established things which are existing in dependence on other truly existent things, for instance; that we have objects which are truly constructed of parts which are in turn made of smaller parts such as atoms etc. This is of course one way of looking at dependent origination, but this would be considered a very coarse and realist/essentialist view. One that subtly promotes a sense of own-being or essence to things. So instead what dependent origination is pointing out, is that there is no inherent object to be found apart from (or within) the varying conventional characteristics we attribute to said object. On the other hand there would also be no inherent objects found in relation to (or within a relationship) with the various characteristics attributed to said objects. For each would only be valid when contrasted with the other, and upon discovering a lack of inherency in regards to one, the validity of the other would be compromised as well. Our experiences are merely interdependent conventional constructs composed of unfounded inferences.

In this way, the object 'itself', as an essential core 'thing' is unfindable. We instead only find a designated collection of pieces, which do not in fact create anything apart from themselves, and even then, the parts are also arbitrary designations as well, for if there is no inherently existent object, there can be no inherent parts, characteristics or attributes either.

So for example, if a table were truly inherently existent, meaning it exists independently, then we would be able to find that table independently of its varying characteristics. The table would be able to exist independently of being observed, independent of its color or texture, independent of its parts and pieces, independent of its designated name, independent of its surroundings etc. In contrast, if observation - or consciousness for example - were truly existent, we would likewise be able to find it apart from the perception of the table, surrounding environment, and so on. There is no essential, 'core' nature that a table in fact 'is' or possesses, and the same goes for consciousness and anything else.

For sentient beings afflicted with ignorance, conceptual imputation and conventional language are mistaken as pointing towards authentic persons, places, things, etc. When ignorance is undone, there is freedom to use conventional language, however it doesn't create confusion because wisdom directly knows ignorance for what it is. In Buddhism conventionality is allowed to be a tool implemented for communication, so we're allowed to be John Doe or Mary Smith, trees, rocks, cars are allowed to be designations. Conventionality is simply a useful tool which doesn't point to anything outside of itself. The conventional truth is relative... words, concepts, ideas, persons, places, things etc., and is contrasted by ultimate truth, which is emptiness.

All apparent phenomena which fall under the category of 'conditioned' - meaning they accord with one or more of the four extremes (existence, nonexistence, both, neither) - originate dependently. We know this is so because there is no such thing as phenomena which doesn't arise dependent upon causes and conditions.

"Whatever is dependently co-arisen

That is explained to be emptiness.

That, being a dependent designation

Is itself the middle way.

Something that is not dependently arisen,

Such a thing does not exist.

Therefore a non-empty thing

Does not exist."

-- Nāgārjuna

Soh Wei YuAdmin

Soh:

recently i have been reading some old posts by kyle dixon
i found that his salt analogy to be a good explanation of chariot applied to all phenomena
from https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/03/a-sun-that-never-sets.html
[6:00 am, 17/11/2021] John Tan: Yes. Not easy to find one that has Kyle's insights and experiences. Not even among those so called "masters" and "teachers".
[6:33 am, 17/11/2021] John Tan: He seems less active in reddit nowadays (Soh: not exactly true: https://www.reddit.com/user/krodha/comments/)
A Sun That Never Sets
AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
A Sun That Never Sets

A Sun That Never Sets
2

· Reply
· Remove Preview
· 10h

Jayson MPaulAuthor
Soh Wei Yu I've read over this one many times in the past. So many gems in here!
1
· Reply
·

· 51m

Данила Игнатовски
Soh Wei Yu can you explain, please, about non-arising.
First in my practice I saw that everything is just arising and passing away. Now I see with a little bit more clarity, contemplate on impermanence and feel like phenomenons just passing away. When it arises it just automatically begin to die. Only verb, only processes and everything is going to dissolve right after its was birth.
My only suggestion about non-arising its about empty nature of everything, like holograms, thats why nothing is really arrises nor passes away. Its like imagination. Also a few weeks ago you commented somewhere in topic of awareness real or not, that "only appearances is real". My guess its like images in dream, but its lack of inherent existence/substance. Can you put it short in your simple words, thank you.
· Reply
·

· 1h · Edited

Soh Wei YuAdmin
Данила Игнатовски
Let's say you see a mirage, the mirage is simply a conglomeration of various causes and conditions aggregating and appearing as a mirage, but can a true substance or essence of a mirage be found within or apart from those conditions and appearances? No mirage can be found. Such a mirage is thus never truly arisen, never come into existence anywhere, and is a mere coalescence of appearance and emptiness.
Or a reflection of a moon on water, can it be said that something is truly born in the water? No, what is on display is simply the union of dependent arising and emptiness.
All phenomena, all appearances and displays have this same nature of being like a chariot, like weather. Whatever dependently originates in truth never really arise, is empty. And this very emptiness is also the nature of mind, of consciousness, of all displays.
Nagarjuna:
What arises in dependence is not born;
That is proclaimed by the supreme knower of reality 😊 Buddha).

Candrakirti:
(The realist opponent says): If (as you say) whatever thing arises in dependence is not even born, then why does (the Madhyamika) say it is not born? But if you (Madhyamika) have a reason for saying (this thing) is not born, then you should not say it "arises in dependence." Therefore, because of mutual inconsistency, (what you have said) is not valid.)
(The Madhyamika replies with compassionate interjection:)
Alas! Because you are without ears or heart you have thrown a challenge that is severe on us! When we say that anything arising in dependence, in the manner of a reflected image, does not arise by reason of self-existence - at that time where is the possibility of disputing (us)!” - excerpt from Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real: Buddhist Meditation and the Middle View

· Reply
· 7m · Edited

Soh Wei YuAdmin
The non-arising of phenomena is subtler than the insight into the impermanence of conditioned phenomena.
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2015/01/four-levels-of-insight-into-emptiness_9.html
Thusness had a casual discussion with me regarding the various phases of seeing through intrinsic-ness in experience: Realizing the nature (i.e. non-arising, empty nature) of clarity is not the same as realizing clarity. Anatta can lead one to experience whatever arises/appearance as presence.
Presence is part of the journey. The practitioner goes through anatta and realizes what we called presence is just appearance. Then he must start
looking at absence. There are at least 4 levels of seeing through intrinsic-ness or the realizing of absence and anatta is just the beginning.
1. The emptiness (i.e. non-existence of a) background
2. Seeing foreground appearance as empty like mist or shimmering paint in
the pond but appearance is seen as arising, abiding and ceasing.
3. Seeing absence in vivid presence... means in clear vivid non-dual
appearance, realize it is never there at all. At this phase, there must
be complete conviction without the slightest doubt from logical
analysis in understanding why it is "never there". The article where I
asked you what is second fold... non-Arisen emptiness. (link: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2013/04/daniel-post-on-anattaemptiness.html)
4. Turn insight of non-arisen in 3 into a taste, otherwise the 2 mindstreams cannot become one... that is, mind stream of dependent arising and emptiness are like what Tsongkhapa said "mutually exclusive", no way to become one unless one reaches Buddhahood. This is because we do not know the key is in recognizing the taste of absence (i.e translate the logical and inferring consciousness into a taste).
Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness
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Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness
Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness
· Reply
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and sent him https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/06/non-arising-due-to-dependent-origination.html

....
level 1
krodha
· 9m
how exactly is something like that mountain not separate from me?
Conventionally, on the level of what Dzogchen calls the “rol pa” expression of our consciousness, the mountain is conventionally separate and distinct.
But when we realize the nature of the mountain we recognize that the appearance is actually the display of our own rigpa.
Also there is no actual internal point of reference in the mind, no actual subject. No actual self. Nevertheless, a self appears through the influence of delusion.
4
level 2
[deleted]
· 9m
holy shit....you just made me think of something:
so basically, like when we forget when we dream at night: in a "dream", the mind has the potential-power and habit of making a "world" within its scope. because it doesnt recognize the dream is really itself, still stuck in ignorance from lifetimes ago, it takes the "dream"-world seriously as "outside" of itself. is it pretty much like that? (of course i dont want to get into extremes of whats 'real' vs. 'dream', but this was just an analogy i thought of)
1
level 3
krodha
· 9m
like when we forget when we dream at night: in a "dream", the mind has the potential-power and habit of making a "world" within its scope. because it doesnt recognize the dream is really itself, it takes the world seriously. is it pretty much like that? (of course i dont want to get into extremes of whats 'real' vs. 'dream', but this was just an analogy i thought of)

Precisely.

The wheel [of the twelve links] is set in motion because one's own nature is not recognised, just like the deception that occurs when a magical illusion is not recognised as a magical illusion or when a dream is not recognised as a dream.□—Jamgon Kongtrul
4
level 2
krodha
· 6y · edited 6y

Eternalism is the idea that you are born and then you can live forever in your current body.

No, eternalism is simply reifying existents, whether allegedly conditioned or unconditioned... your assertion that eternalism only applies to conditioned phenomena but not to unconditioned phenomena is nothing more than a guise

you employ to veil and hide your eternalist view. If you suggest that there is a truly existent ultimate nature, you are an eternalist plain and simple and your position is no different than Vedanta.

So the realm of the uncreated/Nirvana has none of the flaws of the theories of eternalism

Your interpretation certainly does, for it is precisely eternalism, i.e. reification of a truly existent, unconditioned nature.

the Buddha was not against all eternalism

Yes, śrāvakas usually believe that the Buddha advocated for some species of eternalism, however this notion is refuted by Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna.

To step out of impermanence, you need to be timeless - without time affecting you, bringing with it change, decay and death - this is the eternal that the Buddha actively told us to seek. This is called akaliko - timeless.

This is just Śrāvakayāna dualism.

As the Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra states:

"Outside of the saṃskṛtas [conditioned dharmas], there are no asaṃskṛta [unconditioned dharmas], and the true nature [bhūtalakṣaṇa] of the saṃskṛta is exactly asaṃskṛta. The saṃskṛtas being empty, etc. the asaṃskṛtas themselves are also empty, for the two things are not different. Besides, some people, hearing about the defects of the saṃskṛtadharmas, become attached [abhiniveśante] to the asaṃskṛtadharmas and, as a result of this attachment, develop fetters."

Going on to say that the person who rejects the saṃskṛtas is attached to the asaṃskṛtas by attributing to them the characteristics of non-production [anutpāda], and by the very fact of this attachment those asaṃskṛtas are immediately transformed into saṃskṛtas. Which, as I have pointed out before; is equivalent to the act of turning dharmatā into a dharmin by considering it to be a separate, existent, unconditioned, free-standing nature. It should instead be understood that the very non-arising of conditioned dharmas [saṃskṛtadharmas] is the unconditioned [saṃskṛta] dharmatā. It is an epistemic realization which dispels ignorance by severing the causes and conditions for invalid cognition... not an ontological X that exists on its own (that is what Vedanta teaches).

And so in this vein Nāgārjuna states:□"Neither saṃsāra or nirvāṇa exist; instead, nirvāṇa is the thorough knowledge of saṃsāra"□-- Yuktiṣāṣṭika

Saṃsāra is the result of confusion, nothing is ultimately established in saṃsāra (conditioned phenomena or otherwise)... and if nothing is ultimately established in saṃsāra, saṃsāra is itself never truly established at anytime. If saṃsāra is not established, nirvāṇa is not established. Recognizing the true nature [satyalakṣhaṇa] of saṃsāra, as innately unproduced [anutpāda] is to realize that the allegedly conditioned [saṃskṛta] is a misconception of ignorance, and therefore the conditioned has in fact been unconditioned [asaṃskṛta] from the very beginning. That is awakening to the unconditioned, and that is the awakening which is the doorway to the cessation of suffering.
"Since arising, abiding and perishing are not established,□the conditioned is not established;□since the conditioned is never established,□how can the unconditioned be established?□-- Nāgārjuna

So it is not that there is indeed an unconditioned nirvāṇa which abides apart from conditioned phenomena. The 'unconditioned' is merely knowledge of the actual nature of 'conditioned' phenomena. Phenomena [dharmins] are themselves, in essence, unconditioned, their unconditioned nature is their dharmatā.

"Good son, the term 'unconditioned' is also a word provisionally invented by the First Teacher. Now, if the First Teacher provisionally invented this word, then it is a verbal expression apprehended by imagination. And, if it is a verbal expression apprehended by imagination, then, in the final analysis, such an imagined description does not validate a real thing. Therefore, the unconditioned does not exist."□-- Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra

This is why nirvāṇa is a cessation; it is the exhaustion of one's ignorance regarding the nature of phenomena. What ceases, is cause for the further arising and proliferation of the very delusion which lends to the misperception of arising, abiding and destruction in conditioned phenomena.
For this reason, nirvāṇa is said to be 'permanent', because due to the exhaustion of cause for the further proliferation of saṃsāra, saṃsāra no longer has any way to arise. However nirvāṇa is also a conventional designation which is only relevant in relation to the delusion of saṃsāra which has been exhausted, and so nirvāṇa is nothing real that exists in itself either, it is merely the absence of affliction, an exhaustion, an unbinding, a release, an extinguishing, a liberation, a cessation... that is nirvāṇa. There is sickness and there is health... health is simply the absence of sickness.

So the correct understanding of phenomena, reveals that phenomena (as misperceived via ignorance) have never occurred in the way one's ignorance made them appear. As a result it is seen that there has never been anything which was bound, nor anything which required liberation. That seeing reveals the unreality of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as inherent entities, and the definitive and living freedom from saṃsāra [bondage] and nirvāṇa [liberation] is itself liberation.

Eternalism; in the vein of reifying a truly existent ultimate, is never necessary, and is a ridiculous notion.

[11:01 AM, 5/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: - kyle wrote six years ago
[11:07 AM, 5/26/2021] John Tan: 👍
[11:09 AM, 5/26/2021] John Tan: Actually mmk is a very good exercise post anatta for mature understanding of the anatta insight. However in order to do that one must adhere to the padaegogy and methodology of reasoning of two truth in madhyamaka which can take some time.
[11:11 AM, 5/26/2021] John Tan: I m fairly clear of mmk after all these years of studies. Thought of writing mmk and comparing with the anatta insight and spells out what it lacks.
[11:11 AM, 5/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[11:12 AM, 5/26/2021] John Tan: Problem is it will take up too much of my time unless I go into retiring mode...lol
[11:12 AM, 5/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: lol
[11:12 AM, 5/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: can slowly start writing bit by bit
[11:13 AM, 5/26/2021] John Tan: Yeah that is what I thought also.”

“[10:36 PM, 8/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Kyle dixon:

As sentient beings our minds are afflicted by delusion [avidyā] which causes us to misperceive conditioned phenomena (persons, places, things). And as a result we believe that we interact with objects and entities that have "arisen" or have been born and now exist. We also then believe that said objects will disintegrate at some point and said entities will die,

including ourselves, thus ceasing to exist, being rendered non-existent, the second of the four extremes that pertain to an entity.

When we awaken to see the actual nature of phenomena, then we experientially recognize that those objects and entities have never arisen/been born in the first place. And that is "non-arising". That lack of initial birth or origination means the entity or dharma that could coincide with any of the four extremes is unfindable.

A simple way to communicate it would be akin to wandering in the desert and suddenly perceiving an oasis with foliage and water etc., one would be elated and would truly be convinced that there is an oasis there. Convinced that trees, grass, water are all present there and one is genuinely perceiving objects that they have encountered, that these objects exist, have originated in the desert and are real.

Upon getting closer to the oasis the appearance begins to dissipate and one realizes that the oasis was only a mirage from the very beginning. At that point one has a realization that is akin to "non-arising", because one recognizes that the oasis was merely a byproduct of causes and conditions, governed by confusion, and was never there to begin with, it was non-arisen from the very beginning. As such it makes no sense to say that the oasis as an entity ever existed, or ceased to exist, or both or neither, the oasis was simply a misconception predicated on ignorance from the very beginning.

In the same way all phenomena appear to originate due to the presence of ignorance [avidyā], however once ignorance is uprooted then phenomena are seen to be primordially unoriginated. As discussed in the Yukisastikakarika:

When the perfect gnosis sees that things come from ignorance as condition, nothing will be objectified, either in terms of arising or destruction.

And,

Since the Buddhas have stated that the world is conditioned by ignorance, why is it not reasonable [to assert] that this world is [a result of] conceptualization?

Since it comes to an end when ignorance ceases; why does it not become clear then that it was conjured by ignorance?

The Acintyastavaḥ states:

Like a dream, an illusion, [or] seeing two moons: Thus have You seen the world, as a creation not created as real. Like a son who is born, established, and dies in a dream, the world, You have said, is not really born, does not endure, and is not destroyed... According to cognition of truth, [however], You maintain that there is no annihilation or permanence. [You] assert that the entire world is empty of substance, like a mirage.

Here, the Lokātītastava discusses how origination and destruction or cessation that leads to non-existence are rendered impossibilities after recognizing non-arising:

You have stated that all arising is like the arising of an illusion. Therefore You have fully understood that this world has arisen due to imagination. It is unreal, [and] not having originated it cannot be destroyed.

That is how the limbs of the tetralemma are rendered null and void. Therefore as you can see these explanations are fully in line with the actual logic and reasoning of the buddhadharma.

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https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/ovv64j/notself_doesnt_mean_that_there_isnt_a_self/h7gexiu/?context=8&depth=9
[5:41 AM, 8/4/2021] John Tan: 👍”

Soh Wei YuAdmin
After anatta realisation, further investigation into emptiness teachings and prajnaparamita and mmk reveals that the empty nature of self equally applies to the empty nature of all phenomena, revealing that the nature of all appearances to be its non arising, its lack of coming and going, arising, abiding and ceasing, which leaves appearances equivalent to magical illusions like a rainbow or phantom or mirage. As I explained in 2016,
[17/1/16, 3:30:25 PM] Soh Wei Yu: when we scroll text on facebook, people with erroneous essence view think that the text is actually going up and down, or as if the text below is hidden below and we have to scroll down and 'get there'. but when we realize D.O. and non-arising we don't see phenomena arising, abiding, ceasing, going to or coming from... so scrolling of text is merely appearing without movement, abiding no where and going no where, like a magical illusion.
the same for all other phenomena 'in the universe'
[17/1/16, 9:33:31 PM] John Tan: Quite good. Knowing that we must also know about functionality.
[17/1/16, 9:35:50 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. can you give an example
[17/1/16, 9:41:35 PM] John Tan: When you see texts scrolling from page 1 to page 2, paging serves the function of breaking down the "texts" into the window or screen frame to allow us the possibility of seeing the whole texts.
· Reply
· 24m · Edited
Soh Wei YuAdmin
This is the 'non inherent existence' applied at a deeper and wider scope
· Reply
· 24m
Soh Wei YuAdmin
Otherwise one can get stuck with AF (actual freedom) level of realisation, where the self/Self is unreal and deconstructed and dissolved, but the physical world is extremely real and truly existing.
After twofold emptiness, appearances are still vividly self-luminous, but empty and not truly existent. The Dzogchen term is clearly apparent non-existents.
Kyle Dixon wrote 8 months ago:
"It means the appearance and the knowing of the appearance are the same. However “appearances are mind” is primarily a sarma school view. In Dzogchen mennagde it is not said that appearances are mind but rather that appearances are med par gsal snang, which means “non-existent clear appearances” or “clearly apparent non-existents.”"
· Reply
· 22m · Edited"

Soh Wei Yu

More on the text scrolling analogy:
[29/3/16, 12:15:19 AM] John Tan: First you must know there are many unexamined assumptions
[29/3/16, 12:16:29 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. What assumptions?
[29/3/16, 12:19:34 AM] John Tan: There can only arising, duration and cessation when an "essence" can be found.
[29/3/16, 12:20:23 AM] John Tan: But you may think you hv gone through thorough enough to know about essencelessness
[29/3/16, 12:21:57 AM] John Tan: Saying whatever originates in dependence does not originate, abide and cease does not mean you hv understood anything.
[29/3/16, 12:22:31 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[29/3/16, 12:24:07 AM] John Tan: The teaching starts with a sincere heart in looking for an essence but can't be found under ultimate analysis though in appearance, phenomena appear solid.
[29/3/16, 12:27:44 AM] John Tan: The first actual taste of the profound teaching of essencelessness is from the insight of anatta. However the taste is far from mature realisation of the meaning of non-arising and empty nature of phenomena.
[29/3/16, 12:30:19 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[29/3/16, 12:30:58 AM] John Tan: So if you do not see essencelessness deep enough, you won't be able to "feel" essencelessness
[29/3/16, 12:32:45 AM] John Tan: There when someone says a bell is ringing, it only sounds logical conventionally, not ultimately.
[29/3/16, 12:43:41 AM] John Tan: For in ultimate sense, neither bell nor sound can be found when sought.
[29/3/16, 12:43:56 AM] John Tan: And what does that mean?
[29/3/16, 12:44:53 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Bell is labelled based on the sound, the Colours, the function
[29/3/16, 12:44:59 AM] Soh Wei Yu: No bell can be found
[29/3/16, 12:45:36 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Sound is labelled in dependence on hearing, hitting, etc
[29/3/16, 12:46:36 AM] John Tan: Like the example you gave once, these texts I m typing scrolls up and down seem to appear and disappear. The texts seem to hide below window and when scrolled upward appears to re-surface from below the window.
[29/3/16, 12:47:22 AM] John Tan: But in ultimate sense, there is no text hidden below the chat window.
[29/3/16, 12:48:18 AM] John Tan: But that is in ultimate sense, not conventional sense.
[29/3/16, 12:49:12 AM] John Tan: So in ultimate sense, there is nothing truly arise, abide and cease.
[29/3/16, 12:49:33 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[29/3/16, 12:58:15 AM] John Tan: So bringing this into actual taste (as first person), what is this telling u? In anatta, what is it telling you and how it feels like?
[29/3/16, 3:40:51 AM] Soh Wei Yu: In Anatta one is freed from the ghostly image of inherent existence and directly taste the appearance.. Likewise for non arising one taste the nature of appearance as empty clarity free from Essence, coming, going
[29/3/16, 3:41:36 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Anatta tells you there is no ghost or inherent existence to awareness besides seen, heard, smell
[29/3/16, 7:59:02 AM] John Tan: You no need to work?
[29/3/16, 7:59:22 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Need to work
[29/3/16, 7:59:30 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Woke up in the middle of the night lol
[29/3/16, 7:59:45 AM] John Tan: Lol
[29/3/16, 8:02:21 AM] John Tan: Free from the inherent existence of self...not free from inherent existence

[29/3/16, 8:14:35 AM] John Tan: Yes allowing one to directly taste the transience and realize these transience (color, sound, thoughts, sensations, scent) that we shunt away is the very suchness. So don't look elsewhere for suchness. Sound, sensations, colors, form, scent...all these transience phenomena...they are like the texts being scrolled up and down, appears to come and go...but in ultimate sense, understand that they do not truly arise, abide and cease. That is the non-arising and empty nature of suchness.
It is fully understanding these evanescence appearances without having the need to resort back to a linking essence that is difficult.
[29/3/16, 8:15:53 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[29/3/16, 8:16:55 AM] John Tan: There is some true existence hearing nature is the problem...for that is precisely the cause of duality.
[29/3/16, 8:17:07 AM] John Tan: And cause of suffering.
[29/3/16, 8:22:44 AM] John Tan: If one needs to establish "sound" to be "here", to be "now" or to have firm establishment any hearing nature separate from sound....that is stressful, not liberating.
[29/3/16, 8:26:44 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[29/3/16, 8:28:16 AM] John Tan: Freedom comes from directly experiencing the empty and non-arising nature of appearances in real time...not needing an Essence ground is the releasing factor.
[29/3/16, 8:41:11 AM] John Tan: The key issue is most do not know the way of essencelessness. It is directly opposite of "holding...rather it is just full and unreserve opening...complete welcoming
[29/3/16, 8:45:18 AM] John Tan: Even you after conceptually understood...even after initially taste of selflessness and the insight of anatta, there is no release. The karmic tendency of holding on to an essence has infiltrated into every aspect of our thoughts, manifested in our every action, imprinted into every cell.
[29/3/16, 8:46:48 AM] John Tan: The body must be opened up too in addition to just dissolving reified mental constructs.

1
□ □ ·
Reply
□ · 2h

“Geovani Geo wrote:
Causes and effects do apply to the eddies in the flow. Cultivating equipoise is to imerse wholly into the stream. All eddies are water. No need to go back into thoroughly analyzing eddies and the flow. Once the insight has been introduced, the slightest intent is enough. Not even that.

John Tan wrote:

Geovani Geo
, I think it is still necessary. Even after anatta insight and experience, the line of reasoning of dependent origination and emptiness need not be clear.

It is not easy for the mind to realize how negative emotions and attachments are related to thoughts of production, origination and existence -- "dualistic and inherent" view; but if we keep refining and get used to the line of reasoning,

we will be able to release and relief the mind from all these notions. That said the process of freeing is a very gradual and slow process unlike the sudden flash of insights as in the case of koan, self enquiry of I AM or anatta.

For firm progress, integration of these experiences, insights and the right view is needed -- how anatta insight and experience are related to the seeing through of the mental construct and convention of "self/Self" and extending such realization to all phenomena to the eventual freedom of the mind from all conceptualities.
□ □ ·
Reply
□ · 16m
□ ·
Edited”

“[16/12/16, 12:54:29 AM] John Tan: When you hit a bell, how did the sound arise? Where did it go? Is there arising or can you say there is arising? This is crucial and key to understanding of emptiness and releasing. Why whatever arises in dependence due to conditions cannot be said to arise nor cease? And that is the middle path.

Neither arises, Nor not arises.
Neither ceases, Nor not ceases.
Neither existence Nor non existence.
Neither affirmation Nor negation.

And these must be understood the right way with right view. Not for beautiful language. If consciousness ceases this moment can you say it ceases? If this thought ceases can you say it ceases?
[16/12/16, 1:00:05 AM] Soh Wei Yu: No, nothing arose or cease like a city mirage on horizon
[16/12/16, 1:00:32 AM] John Tan: But why it cannot be said to cease? I have told you many times you must understand from dependent origination and not just emptiness. Because whatever arises do not arise by itself. Now what did Buddha say? If there is karma and conditions, can phenomena not manifest? If this mind moment ceases, can next mind moment not arise if conditions are there? No, mind moment will arise on conditions, so there is no real cessation. Yet this mind moment is not the same as next mind moment, and they cannot be said to be different either. It cannot be said to have not ceased, and cannot be said to have ceased. As such whatever arises in dependence is non-arisen. Then you talk about the direct experience of mind... Of the six entries and exits. Experience and view. Get it?

You must first separate direct experience from view. Talk about non-dual experience, how it can be distorted with view, and from anatta you realise right explanation of the experience should be dependent origination, emptiness and non-arisen. Not from essence view. And middle path is understood that way. There is not creation but not no creation. Middle path is dependent origination. Because we are so accustomed to essence view, we cannot get used to dependent origination. We want to use essence view to understand dependent origination.

[17/12/16, 8:25:11 AM] John Tan: But it is also important to note that arisen is often confused with appearance.

There is ongoing appearance, the nature of appearance is non-arisen. Also emphasis must be on conditions, that is DO. That is, seldom do we see explanations why because of DO, the nature of mind/phenomena is empty and non-arisen. Or are there articles about it?
[17/12/16, 9:55:30 AM] Soh Wei Yu: I don't see much about it
[17/12/16, 9:55:41 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Maybe gelug talks about it
[17/12/16, 9:56:34 AM] John Tan: Mmk talks about it and is everywhere but I can't understand why it is not emphasized that way. Many are only interested in one truth, highest. Emptiness and non-arisen of phenomena. That is a pity. If we do understand emptiness and non-arisen nature of mind and phenomena from the perspective of DO, it is not the right understanding imo.

[18/12/16, 8:43:36 AM] John Tan: I mean If we do not understand emptiness and non-arisen nature of mind and phenomena from the perspective of DO, it is not the right understanding IMO.”

“As it is said in the *Root Verses of the Middle Way*:
Not from self, not from other,
Not from both and not from neither—
Not for any entity at all anywhere,
Is there ever any production.”

“So, regarding production such as that of the sprout from the seed, the Ācārya Nāgārjuna said:
From a seed that is destroyed or intact,
The sprout is not produced,
So you taught that all production
Is just like magical creation.
As it is said, the appearances of dependent origination cannot withstand logical analysis, and when investigated using reasoning that inquires into the ultimate, not even the slightest so-called ‘production’ may be observed. Yet, when left unanalyzed, just like the appearances during a dream, a sprout appears to be produced from a seed. This is simply the way in which the conventional is presented.”

- See Four Great Logical Arguments of the Middle Way

“Pursuant to the middle view, Tson-kha-pa cites Nagarjuna's Yuk-tisastika and Candrakirti's Yuktisastika-vrtti.

Nagarjuna:

What arises in dependence is not born;
That is proclaimed by the supreme knower of reality (= Buddha).

Candrakirti:

(The realist opponent says): If (as you say) whatever thing arises in dependence is not even born, then why does (the Madhyamika) say it is not born? But if you (Madhyamika) have a reason for saying (this thing) is not born, then you should not say it "arises in dependence." Therefore, because of mutual inconsistency, (what you have said) is not valid.)
(The Madhyamika replies with compassionate interjection:)
Alas! Because you are without ears or heart you have thrown a challenge that is severe on us! When we say that anything arising in dependence, in the manner of a reflected image, does not arise by reason of self-existence - at that time where is the possibility of disputing (us)!” - excerpt from Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real: Buddhist Meditation and the Middle View

Malcolm quotes from Lotus Sutra:
“Chapter 5 states it well:

“ ‘The one who knows that phenomena
Have the nature of dreams and illusions,
Are without an essence like a plantain tree
And are the same as echoes, {79}

“ ‘That one knows the nature
Of the entire three realms,
Has no bondage, is liberated,
And knows nirvāṇa. {80}

“ ‘All phenomena are empty and equal,
And their nature is without diversity or differentiation.
If that is not perceived,
There is no insight into any phenomenon. {81}

“ ‘The one with great wisdom sees
The entire dharmakāya.
There are no three yānas at all;
There is only the single yāna. {82}

“ ‘All phenomena are the same;
All are the same, always the same.
Knowing that, one knows
Nirvāṇa, deathlessness, and peace.’ ”

Chapter 13 also has a pretty good summary:

“When the stable ones do not entertain the notion of ‘woman,’
And do not have the concept of ‘man,’
Then, because all phenomena are unborn,
Upon seeking them they do not see them. {17}

“This practice that I have described
Is completely that of the bodhisattvas.
Listen to the explanation
Of that which is their field of activity. {18}

“These phenomena are declared nonexistent;
They are all unproduced and unborn.
They remain empty and motionless at all times:
That is what is called the field of activity of the wise. {19}

“Being and not being, existing and not existing:
These are fabrications of erroneous conceptualization.
Unborn phenomena that are also unoriginated
Are misconstrued to be born and existing. {20}

“With a one-pointed mind, always in meditation,
As completely stable as Mount Sumeru,
Stable in this way, they should view
All these phenomena as being like space. {21}

“They are always the same as space, without an essence,
Motionless and devoid of illusory thoughts.
This is the way phenomena are throughout time.
This is what is called the field of activity of the wise.”

“The next understanding you must have after anatta and emptiness is to know that all qualities similar to those that are described and sounded ontological are always manifesting presently, spontaneously and effortlessly after the purification of anatta and emptiness insights. That is, spontaneous arising is not just saying responding automatically. It is the manifestation of these blissful characteristics of nature spontaneously. Non-arising, unmoving, unchanging, pristiness, clarity... spontaneously present” – John Tan, 2009

“Mr. T: I cannot find a ground a base, to identify with, everything is changing constantly. Arising and passing away. All of experience, where do I stand?

Kyle Dixon: Arising and passing away are characteristics of conditioned phenomena. As practitioners of the buddhadharma, our aim is to fully realize the unconditioned nature of phenomena, free of arising and cessation. That natural and perfect nature, is the true refuge.

Upon realizing that nature, the Buddha stated the following:

I have obtained the ambrosia of Dharma,□ profound, peaceful, immaculate, luminous and unconditioned. □Even though I explain it, no one will understand, □I think I will remain in the forest without speaking. □Free from words, untrained by speech,□ suchness, the nature of Dharma, is like space□ free from the movements of mind and intellect, □supreme, amazing, the sublime knowledge. □Always like space, □nonconceptual, luminous, □the teaching without periphery or center □is expressed in this Dharmawheel. □Free from existence and nonexistence,□ beyond self and nonself, □the teaching of natural nonarising □is expressed in this Dharmawheel.

— *The Ārya-lalitavistara-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra*” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

"This is correct. "Permanent" is not referring to something not undergoing change, it refers to the absence of causing of arising." - John Tan, 2021

"To conclude, in the expanse of phenomena, there is no dual nature of appearance and emptiness, and no twofold division. Therefore, by a mere expression of language—through words—it is also said that the relative truth and ultimate truth are “indivisible.” Although the expanse is like this, separate categories are made merely in terms of the conventional, based on the way things appear. In this way, all phenomena included within samsara—all that is comprised by distorted perceptions and all that appears through the power of dualistic thought—are not real when analyzed. They are fluctuating and impermanent; therefore, these deceptive phenomena are the relative truth. And all phenomena comprised by great nirvana—which is difficult to realize and thus profound, free from constructs, and which is the luminous clarity of wisdom’s knowing, relinquished from all suffering—are beyond material and momentary phenomena. Therefore, they are free from the misery of change. Having the nature of immutability, they are the ultimate truth."

- Mipham

Duckworth, Douglas; Mipam, Jamgon. Jamgon Mipam: His Life and Teachings (p. 159). Shambhala. Kindle Edition.

In the seen only the seen is also no seer, no seeing and nothing seen

John Tan: If seen is just seen, then there is no movement.
Soh: Movement?
John Tan: In the seen only the seen is also no seer, no seeing and nothing seen. There is no changing nor unchanging.
Soh: Ic..
Soh: The nancy also said the same.. nothing changing or unchanging

[10:15 pm, 05/10/2021] John Tan: That is ultimate view.

[10:16 pm, 05/10/2021] John Tan: Conventionally, there is changes and impermanence and origination in dependence as the right way of expression.

Soh: https://nancyspoems.blogspot.com/
Nancy:

We are infinite reflections without a source
Echoes spinning
Fleeting images
Flowing thought dreams
Without sides or a middle
Dancing without movement or non movement
without direction or non direction
There are no colors or rainbows without us
Without an imaginary persona there is no imaginary heart
Beating
Loving all this
That is not this
Or that
Or both
Or neither

There is no one to be free or bound
Or gaze as infinite awe painting the dream scape with colors that cannot be seen
Only felt
No one to fall into your unutterable beauty
Or fall endlessly in love with you

....

At first this felt like, 'I am all this!"

Then it felt like, 'All this!'

Later it was .... 'Not even nothing...'

....

no eyes apart from the seeing....
no ears apart from the hearing
no sound separate from the listening...
no wind separate from your cheek
no love separate from your heart
no inside

no outside
the horizon that held the sky apart from the sea
untied itself
the timeline from birth to death collapsed
as well as the time walker
and left this knowing and feeling that there are no things
simply an atemporal seamless flow without movement or non movement....
no things to be permeant or changing ...
feels like the first and last kiss ....
a constant union of what was never apart...

Soh: Sounds like she went through the stages

John Tan: 👍

Labels: Anatta, Emptiness, Movement, Nancy Neithercut 0 comments | |

“In the Questions of Adhyāśaya Sūtra (Adhyāśayasaṃśōdana Sūtra), the Buddha makes this point in a dialogue with a disciple (CTB 161):

"For example, during a magical display, a man sees a woman created by a magician and desire arises in him. His mind becomes ensnared with desire, and he is frightened and ashamed in front of his companions. Rising from his seat, he leaves and later considers the woman to be ugly, impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless. O child of a good lineage, what do you think? Is that man behaving correctly or incorrectly?"

"Blessed One, he who strives to consider a nonexistent woman to be ugly, impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless behaves incorrectly."

The Blessed One said, "O child of a good lineage, you should similarly view those bhikṣus, bhikṣuṇīs, laymen, and laywomen who consider unproduced and unarisen phenomena to be ugly, impermanent, unsatisfactory, and selfless. I do not say that these foolish persons are cultivating the path; they are practicing in an incorrect manner."

Here the Buddha emphasizes that if we contemplate nonexistent objects of attachment as ugly, impermanent, empty, and lacking a self-sufficient substantially existent I, we are missing the point. There’s no use contemplating the impermanence and so forth of nonexistents; if we understood that these things did not exist to start with, our attachment to them would vanish. Meditating on the attributes of coarse true duḥkha is like discussing how to dispose of wilted flowers in a hologram or how to shave the moustache off a turtle when such flowers and such a moustache do not exist. To attain liberation, realization of the ultimate mode of existence—the emptiness of inherent existence of both persons and phenomena—is essential. Saying phenomena are unproduced and unarisen indicates that they are not inherently produced and do not inherently arise, although they are produced and arise conventionally.

~ Searching for the Self, p. 233-234, Dalai Lama & Thubten Chodron”

Kyle Dixon, 2019:

“...the heart of the buddhadharma and Dzogchen in general is the jñāna that results from recognizing the non-arising of phenomena.

If that jñāna is revealed in your mindstream then you will know the meaning of dependent origination.

All practices of Dzogchen and the buddhadharma aim to awaken you so that this is experientially known.

...

You have to differentiate interdependence i.e., dependent existence [parabhāva] and dependent origination [pratītyasamutpāda].

They are not the same.

...

Nāgārjuna discusses the difference in many of his works.

Parabhāva is as you mentioned above, “interdependence,” things depending on things in a coarse sense. Nāgārjuna states that parabhāva is actually a guise for svabhāva, which is the main object of refutation in his view. Thus mistaking parabhāva for pratītyasamutpāda is a major error.

He also states that s/he who sees dependent existence [parabhāva], inherent existence [svabhāva], existence [bhāva] or non-existence [abhāva], do not see the truth of the buddha’s teaching.

The main point is that we cannot mistake dependent origination [pratītyasamutpāda] for mere interdependence.”

“The Correct View of Dependent Origination

John Tan just said: This comment by Malcolm is really good.👍

Session Start: Wednesday, August 09, 2006

(11:32 PM) AEN: namdrol:
While it is true that many non-Buddhist paths a renunciate and so on, the unique feature of the Buddha's path is understanding that phenomena are dependently originated. Dependent origination is critical in developing a correct view.
Is the mere knowledge that phenomena dependently originated sufficient? No.
It is possible to hold a view of dependent origination which is nevertheless realist or substantialist in nature-- a perfect example of this would the way Thich Nhat Hahn's "interbeing" is generally understood. Here, it is never questioned

that the mutually depedendent phenomena exist in dependence because they all exist together. In general, this is also the naive understanding of dependent origination.
(11:32 PM) AEN: Even so, this view of dependent orgination already marks the beginning of turning from a wrong or incorrect view, to a right or correct view.
How do we move from a substantialist interpretation of dependent origination to a non-substantialist understanding? We need to first be open to having our existential assumptions undermined. Any clinging to existence and non-existence must be eradicated before we can properly appreciate the meaning of DO. Some people think this simply means clinging to inherent or ultimate existence. But this is not so. Whatever arises in dependence also must be devoid of mere existence as well.
To understand this fully we must understand the perfection of wisdom sutras in their entirety and the thinking of Nagarjuna and his followers.
(11:32 PM) AEN:
When we have truly understood that phenomena are devoid existence and non-existence because they are dependently originated; we can understand that phenomena do not arise, since existence and dependence are mutually exclusive. Any existence that can be pointed to is merely putative and nominal, and does not bear any reasoned investigation. Since phenomena are dependently originated, and the consequence of dependent origination is that there are no existing existents, we can understand that existents are non-arising by nature. As Buddhapalita states "We do not claim non-existence, we merely remove claims for existing existents."
Whatever does not arise by nature is free from existence and non-existence, and that is the meaning of "freedom from proliferation." In this way, dependent origination = emptiness, and this is the correct view that Buddhas elucidate. There is no other correct view than this.
N”

“The Only Way to the Ultimate Truth

[10:05 PM, 4/12/2021] Soh Wei Yu: malcolm (Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith):

MMK refutes any kind of production other than dependent origination. It is through dependent origination that emptiness is correctly discerned. Without the view of dependent origination, emptiness cannot be correctly perceived, let alone realized. The MMK rejects production from self, other, both, and causeless production, but not dependent origination. The MMK also praises the teaching of dependent origination as the pacifier of proliferation in the mangalam. The last chapter of MMK is on dependent origination. The MMK nowhere rejects dependent origination, it is in fact a defense of the proper way to understand it. The only way to the ultimate truth (emptiness) is through the relative truth (dependent origination), so if one’s understanding of relative truth is flawed, as is the case with all traditions outside of Buddhadharma, and even many within it, there is no possibility that ultimate truth can be understood and realized.

...

[long excerpt cut out – refer to original link]

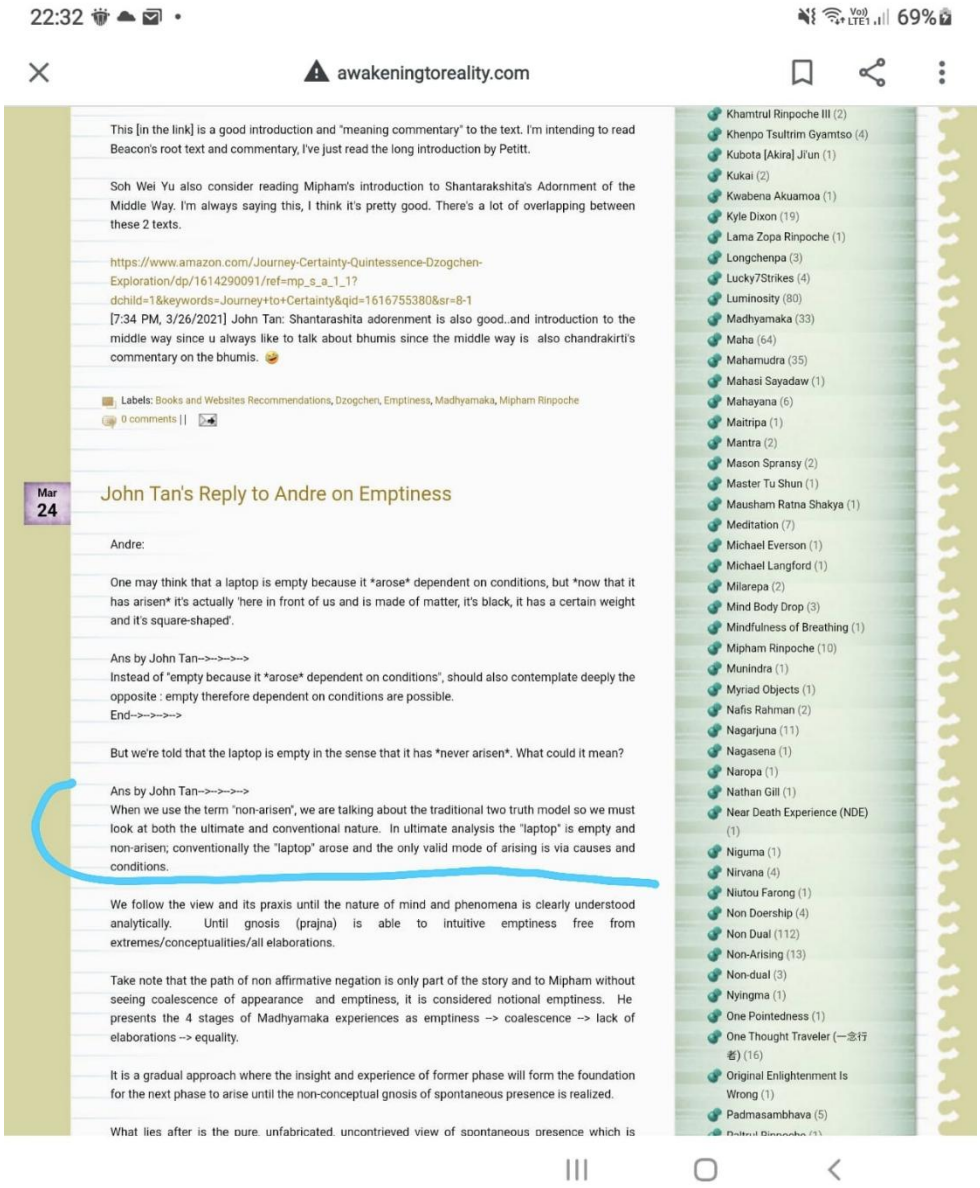
[10:10 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: The DO part is really good.
[10:11 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: When did malcom say that? Recently or in the past?
[10:11 PM, 4/12/2021] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[10:11 PM, 4/12/2021] Soh Wei Yu:
https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=66&t=36315&p=577078#p577078

[11:34 AM, 4/18/2021] John Tan: The part Malcolm discussed on production and existence are good and helpful so you should post those.

...

[10:30 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: Many misunderstand that oh ultimately it is empty and DO is conventional therefore conceptual so ultimately empty non-existence.

We must understand what is meant by empty ultimately but conventionally valid. Nominal constructs are of two types, those that are valid and those that are invalid like "rabbit horns". Even mere appearances free from all elaborations and conceptualities, they inadvertently manifest therefore the term "appearances". They do not manifest randomly or haphazardly, they are valid mode of arising and that is dependent arising. When it is "valid" means it is the acceptable way of explanation and not "rabbit horn" which is non-existence. This part I mentioned in my reply to Andre.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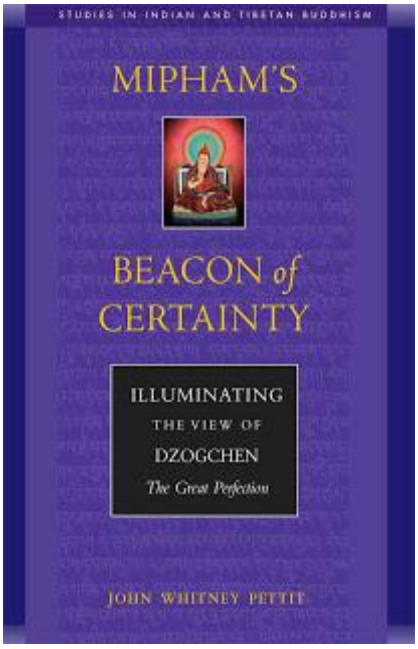
awakeningtoreality.com
This [in the link] is a good introduction and "meaning commentary" to the text. I'm intending to read Beacon's root text and commentary, I've just read the long introduction by Petitt.
Soh Wei Yu also consider reading Mipham's introduction to Shantarakshita's Adornment of the Middle Way. I'm always saying this, I think it's pretty good. There's a lot of overlapping between these 2 texts.
https://www.amazon.com/Journey-Certainty-Quintessence-Dzogchen-Exploration/dp/1614290091/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Journey+to+Certainty&qid=1616755380&sr=8-1
[7:34 PM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: Shantarashita adorenment is also good..and introduction to the middle way since u always like to talk about bhumis since the middle way is also chandrakirti's commentary on the bhumis.
Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, Dzogchen, Emptiness, Madhyamaka, Mipham Rinpoche
0 comments
Mar 24
John Tan's Reply to Andre on Emptiness
Andre:
One may think that a laptop is empty because it *arose* dependent on conditions, but *now that it has arisen* it's actually 'here in front of us and is made of matter, it's black, it has a certain weight and it's square-shaped'.
Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
Instead of "empty because it *arose* dependent on conditions", should also contemplate deeply the opposite : empty therefore dependent on conditions are possible.
End-->-->-->-->
But we're told that the laptop is empty in the sense that it has *never arisen*. What could it mean?
Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
When we use the term "non-arisen", we are talking about the traditional two truth model so we must look at both the ultimate and conventional nature. In ultimate analysis the "laptop" is empty and non-arisen; conventionally the "laptop" arose and the only valid mode of arising is via causes and conditions.
We follow the view and its praxis until the nature of mind and phenomena is clearly understood analytically. Until gnosis (prajna) is able to intuitive emptiness free from extremes/conceptualities/all elaborations.
Take note that the path of non affirmative negation is only part of the story and to Mipham without seeing coalescence of appearance and emptiness, it is considered notional emptiness. He presents the 4 stages of Madhyamaka experiences as emptiness --> coalescence --> lack of elaborations --> equality.
It is a gradual approach where the insight and experience of former phase will form the foundation for the next phase to arise until the non-conceptual gnosis of spontaneous presence is realized.
What lies after is the pure, unfabricated, uncontrieved view of spontaneous presence which is
Khamtrul Rinpoche III (2)
Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso (4)
Kubota [Akira] Ji'un (1)
Kukai (2)
Kwabena Akuamoa (1)
Kyle Dixon (19)
Lama Zopa Rinpoche (1)
Longchenpa (3)
Lucky7Strikes (4)
Luminosity (80)
Madhyamaka (33)
Maha (64)
Mahamudra (35)
Mahasi Sayadaw (1)
Mahayana (6)
Maitripa (1)
Mantra (2)
Mason Spransy (2)
Master Tu Shun (1)
Mausham Ratna Shakya (1)
Meditation (7)
Michael Everson (1)
Michael Langford (1)
Milarepa (2)
Mind Body Drop (3)
Mindfulness of Breathing (1)
Mipham Rinpoche (10)
Munindra (1)
Myriad Objects (1)
Nafis Rahman (2)
Nagarjuna (11)
Nagasena (1)
Naropa (1)
Nathan Gill (1)
Near Death Experience (NDE) (1)
Niguma (1)
Nirvana (4)
Niutou Farong (1)
Non Doership (4)
Non Dual (112)
Non-Arising (13)
Non-dual (3)
Nyingma (1)
One Pointedness (1)
One Thought Traveler (一念行者) (16)
Original Enlightenment Is Wrong (1)
Padmasambhava (5)

[10:36 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: Do you get what I meant?

What it means is there is still a "right" or "acceptable" or "valid" way to express it conventionally. Take freedom from all elaborations for example, it doesn't mean "blankness" or "anything goes". There is right understanding of "freedom from all elaborations" that is why Mipham has to qualify that it is not "blankness", it does not reject "mere appearance", it must be understood from the perspective of "coalescence"...and so on and so forth. Similarly, there is right understanding of "arising" conventionally and that is DO.

So when we clearly see how essence = true existence = independence of causes and conditions are untenable for anything to arise, we see dependent arising.”

Book Recommendation: Beacon of Certainty



Link to Beacon of Certainty: https://www.amazon.com/Miphams-Beacon-Certainty-Illuminating-Perfection/dp/0861711572

[11:20 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: I need to find a day to write about mmk 2 truth model, the more I look at it the more beauty I see...lol
[11:21 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: It is fortunate that you have insight into anatta
[11:23 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: What you lack is a strong view to articulate the experiences and insights without falling into extremes.
[11:23 AM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[11:24 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: So far I can't find a teacher or books that can beautifully blend the whole thing together. Mipham is the closest I can get.
[11:26 AM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. was actually planning to read mipham book during my reservist
[11:35 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: Read beacon of certainty, dialectics you need to have some background
[12:14 PM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Ok
[7:24 PM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Andre wrote:

This [in the link] is a good introduction and "meaning commentary" to the text. I'm intending to read Beacon's root text and commentary, I've just read the long introduction by Petitt.

Soh Wei Yu also consider reading Mipham's introduction to Shantarakshita's Adornment of the Middle Way. I'm always saying this, I think it's pretty good. There's a lot of overlapping between these 2 texts.

https://www.amazon.com/Journey-Certainty-Quintessence-Dzogchen-Exploration/dp/1614290091/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Journey+to+Certainty&qid=1616755380&sr=8-1
[7:34 PM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: Shantarashita adorenment is also good..and introduction to the middle way since you always like to talk about bhumis since the middle way is also chandrakirti's commentary on the bhumis. 🤣

Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, Dzogchen, Emptiness, Madhyamaka, Mipham Rinpoche 0 comments
| |

“[9:36 AM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: In Mipham beacon of certainty, there is a section of verses using cow and horse analogy to illustrate this point of watermoon. He used this to refute shentong view.
[9:17 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: The cow and horse is at the 84 page
[9:17 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: Refuting shentong I think
[9:17 PM, 4/12/2021] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[9:18 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: However it is a clear indication of no mirror insight, only reflection.
[9:18 PM, 4/12/2021] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. you mean mipham described the no mirror insight there?
[9:19 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: Unless you understand the illustration.
[9:19 PM, 4/12/2021] John Tan: It's is watermoon analogy.”

Before reading Beacon of Certainty, one may also start with the shorter book which is also recommended by John Tan: Jamgon Mipham https://www.amazon.com/Jamgon-Mipam-His-Life-Teachings/dp/1590306694

“Purity, primordial state, suchness
[5:11 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: Yes, whatever appears is naturally pure. However this purity is beyond verbalization, conceptualization and duality. Only when both self and phenomena are both exhausted then this primordial and natural state is self-evident.
[5:14 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5:16 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: Our mind is terribly confused by linguistic constructs yet raw and dry non-conceptuality with no insights can't relinquish conceptualization. So how to go about it?🤣
[5:16 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: I mean thorough exhaustion.
[5:16 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5:17 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Some of the texts sounds like advaita unless understood as nature of mind or empty clarity
[5:17 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: Yeah also so.
[5:19 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: Translations always have this issue. Especially studying mmk with all the numerous explanations, translations and interpretations by scholars, masters and translators...lol
[5:20 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: But it does say it is free from extremes:
[5:20 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5:22 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: So from practice perspective, I think just study one system and follow it's pedagogy, methodology and praxis otherwise it can be very confusing when studying the views of the various schools.🤣
[5:24 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5:25 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: These sounds like advaita unless clarified
[5:33 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5:33 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: Yeah I never appreciate all these as the important step is to realize how conventional constructs confuse the thinking mind. Purity, primordial state, suchness before creation all are referring to freedom and exhaustion of these mental proliferations.

So without clear understanding of the conventional, it is pointless to talk about the ultimate.
[5:37 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[5:37 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: But seems like malcolm books and translations on dzogchen are quite clear and distinct from advaita view
[5:37 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: Yes.
[5:37 PM, 5/22/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Like buddhahood in this life carefully goes through all the false views of basis and refutes them
[5:38 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: You have gone through the whole book?
[5:38 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: I just bought Mipham on Buddha nature
[5:40 PM, 5/22/2021] John Tan: I will buy and focus on books by Mipham as it is really inline with anatta insights and some Malcolm translations which I find more accurate.”

“The beginning part about cause and effect is very important. However 慧律法师 always only talk about highest teachings, not many will understand. In Mipham "beacon of certainty" he spoke about "certainty" and this "certainty" comes from analysis, not simply from non-dual experiences and insights. It is this step by step analytical certainty that brings about "cessation" of mind's proliferation -- analytical cessation.

For sutrayana I think 慧律法师 lacks these intermediate step by step analysis of the sutrayana. The cessation of analysis into direct experience through insight is a different approach, much like the 2 stanzas of ATR. Both are important.” – John Tan

Anatta and Post-Anatta, MMK, etc

Someone posted in AtR group:

https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/permalink/5609769555731095/?__cft__[0]=AZWB74vLDMoigKb81ZD7BT9Ng77ejUunrPsPi4wKPnJ2FYSxLqio18tEmHe-NmBN5zIwGth_hkw9z_8ToLdIiiD13S4ncQYx73a25oll6UD0UCTWvQUtbjxudm42qcqDIDgKghUhHaMrAvVY1hVc_Z9iGqk1IsN6Ij6NArtIRbvX9Lsqq0Q59k4G1WcN8wMZ8vs&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R

Hi, I'm just introducing myself to the group.

I'd been a long time visitor to the AtR site, although many years have passed since I'd regularly visited. Only recently did AtR "resonate" with me, this time in a very different way - I was only a casual visitor before. I am slowly going over material, since it seems to speak to me in a new voice now, and familiarizing myself with the AtR terms, and definitions.

When Soh wrote that Thusness said certain practitioners get stuck at certain stages for a decade, I can totally relate. I had felt "stuck" for some while - there were important insights, but after several years, the underlying experience was the same and it seemed I was cycling through the same experiences and insights. I cannot begin to tell you how frustrating that was.

My background has been a mix of Advaita/Buddhism/non-traditional, but mostly Advaita. A little over a decade ago (a Buddhist teacher had mentioned a koan "What is self? Shine the light of awareness back on itself"). After about 12-18 months of meditation and revisiting this koan, there was a radical shift, realizing that "I" was not-mind, not-body. There was this Awareness/is-ness/Still Presence from which thoughts and sensatons of body-mind, which I was previously

identified with, emerged. I had no spiritual education outside of a book and a few CDs of dharma talks by a well known Buddhist teacher (back then the wikipedia page for "non-duality" consisted of maybe 2 sentences and what was online at the time was sparse, confusing and misleading) ... while the first few months were filled with bliss (and a tremendous letting go of energy), I was left disoriented with how to contextualize and interpret my experience. At the time, I had no words for whatever i was experiencing.

But most noticeably, for the first time in my life, I could simply be without any thoughts. There was just ... Stillness, Awareness without thoughts, just utter peace. (I described this as no-mind, but I do not know if it is the same term as how AtR would define it) The process of "selfing" would often subside spontaneoulsy and the Stillness deepend. Of course, this was always temporary.

Over time, I realized there was not longer an "I" that was in the world, but the appearance of the world was "in" Awareness. Nothing was ever experienced, could be experienced other than Awareness. When this happened, there was like a small "pop" and what I felt as physical, corporeal body was just sensations and a concept of "body" arising within Awareness. Ever since then, the experience of the body has been empty, hollow (but not in any negative, dissociated sense), spacious. The body as an identified contraction lifted, old aches and pains disappeared. There was no particular location where I was (But identification with sticky thoughts/stories remained as a problem)

I would articulate this phase as the Universe aware of Itself, experiencing Itself. I have read that others describe their experience as "I am the trees, I am the sky" ... but I found that misleading, as it implies as if the "I" became a larger physical self and somehow one was identified physically and mentally with trees or sky, as if I was inside a tree or that my body had enlarged its boundaries to somehow incorporate trees and clouds... no..
I would describe it more as...the entire phenomenal radiant Universe, the trees, sky, birds, cars, every sensation, every thought, these all shone with a brilliant immediacy as appearances in awarenesss, with no boundaries separating them, arising no-where and everywhere. Everything was "you", for there was nothing not illuminated by awareness, and "I" was not other than the open field of awareness. This was your Original Face as it had always been, appearing to no-one.

What AtR refers to as luminosity, I would've refered to as the brilliant radiance of Awareness. From the first shift, everything looked different. Objects seemed to shine with a brilliance I had never experienced before. The first meal I ate post-shift was the most delicious meal I had ever experienced. And especially, at first, every natural thing, trees, ocean, sky danced with a rhythm and vibrancy I had never experienced, not even as a child. Every moment was fresh, every moment new (and this has carried me steady even when I fell into occasional nihilistic views)

There was just consciousness and the appearances within consciousness, and I was that. The most simplest expression was simply abiding Awareness of Awareness, until there was just Awareness. There was seeing, but no seer, hearing but no hearer, feeling but no feeler, just seeing, hearing, feeling (thought it was no-self within the context of a background awareness). But the realization and articulation of insights seemed important - it seemed to lock the experience in.

*

Sometime last year, I realized that the self, the "me" never was. Prior, there was always some expectation of a "me" gaining insights, losing a "self", but it was very clear the "I" that arose was simply another thought.

But last year, there were several insights. I realized that the self never was. Prior, it felt like there was some "I" that was

progressing and gaining insight, then there was just the seeing that the "I" never was, itwas simply another thought...there was never anything other than consciousness. I could sense a shift, but intellectually, in terms of a path, I couldn't find anything.

Intellectually, I knew that there is no gap between the backgroudnd awareness and its objects - it was just Awareness, but this gap never fully dissolved. I felt some dissonance and confined by the current crop of Advaitic/Neo-advaitic teachers on the circuit, unsatisfied with some of their arguments. I felt stifled by the Advaitic obsession that Awareness was the unchanging, permanent, Reality, all other forms being unreal.

*

From my early stages, I had read several books by western Buddhists: Hagen, Kornfield, Ingram, Wilber (he says he is a practicing Zen buddhist, but he seems to writes from an Advaitic perspective where consciousness is the absolute reality). David Loy's Non-duality seemed to confirm my conviction that Advaita and Bhuddism led to the same insights but with different terms (and in reverse, many Advaitins claim Buddha was really talking about the same thing).

So over time, I gravitated towards Advaita/Neo-Advaita, Goode, Wheeler, Ramana/Nisargardatta, Spira, Tollifson, but I never liked any of the more nihilistic non-dualists (Parsons, etc) .... the experiential component of Direct Path was very compelling.

I went through a period of textual deconstruction, realizing that our normal way of linguistically constructing the world was reinforcing objects as inherently real and self-existing. (But this was always within the assumption that Awareness/Consciouness was the "I" of experience...at the time, I had not encountered convincing arguments, or perhaps was not ready, to deconstruct awareness itself)

I felt a desire to revisit emptiness teachings again, and after reading AtR, this time around, I realized I had interpreted everything within the context of a background awareness, what Loy called substance-view.

From reading the first 2 stages, and a brief read of Soh's No-Mind/One-Mind, those descriptions are very familiar with me. Although I was familiar with many of AtR concepts, the nuances and how Thusness differntiates different aspects of each stage are very new.

It was not easy, but I began the process of questioning the existence of an all-pervasive, permanent, background awareness.

In the same way that there is never a form that arises without a background, never does a background arise without a form. Even awareness is not the ultimate, it is empty itself, and arises co-depently with form. In a way, it is simple, but this dropping was both subtle and radical.

Soh's description of Advaita's view of non-duality is very apt: that it subsumes all forms as modulations of awareness whereas Buddhism gives primacy to emptiness and the dependent origination of forms.

*

In the wave vs Ocean metaphor, the Advaitic interpretation is not that "you" are simultaneously wave and part of the

Ocean (like an arm belonging to a body), but the identity of the wave is identical to the Ocean and the wave is a modulation of the Ocean.
In the Buddhist view, there is no ocean nature from which the waves spring forth, nor is there ocean nature found inherent or embedded within the waves, but the myriad waves of forms all arise co-dependently, empty of inherent existence. There is form, there is no subject/agent/doer experiencing form, prior or after to form, just the luminous display of form.

Before, I did not realize how central DO was to understanding emptiness, anatta. In Advaita, transactional reality is almost negated, with emptiness and DO and forms, conventional reality regains a kind of poignancy. It is hard to describe, the fundamental experience is the same, the emphasis and flavour is very different.

Thank you Soh, Thusness, and all contributors to AtR. For a long time, I felt stuck without a path forward. I'll probably have many questions moving forward

[7:54 AM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Not bad. He should relook these insights and experiences and ask the following:

1. If everything is me, then the sense of "me" must also disappear at that moment of experience. Otherwise one must mature the experience into no-mind and then anatta as an insight.

2. If later it is realized that there is no me/self/Self as an insight and experience (anatta), then one must refine the view and question how does the sense of me/self/Self arise in the first place?

3. Then bring this insight from the refinement of view into all phenomena and all actions.

4. Therefore not only there is no seer in the seen just the seen, there is no seeing and nothing seen. No self, no others and no aggregates.

5. If this is understood only as negations, then one is not free from extremes and all elaborations.

6. Therefore conventionally, there is self, others, seer, seeing and seen. There are causes and effects. There is arising, abiding and ceasing and the only valid mode of arising is dependent arising.

7. Point 1, 2, 3 praxis is on samatha and vipassana. Direct experience and insights. To mature this insight of anatta, the path of analysis is needed.

8. Point 4-6 thorough reasoning and analysis is added to relinquish cognitive obscuration.

9. If he is interested, he should look into mmk *(Nagarjuna's text Mūlamadhyamakakārikā)*, it will expose the many hidden nuances and subtleties of our cognitive obscurations. Patience is needed to get used to the line of reasoning of Nagarjuna. But no need to get involved in those polemics of the Tibetan schools.
[8:08 AM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: 10. Lastly one should understand the praxis of the 2 stanzas and mmk are different. The 2 stanzas are using samatha and vipassana to directly see through mental constructs to realize one's nature (direct path) whereas mmk is via path of analysis and reasoning. So when reading mmk, one must adhere strictly to the conventional 3 fold structure of seer-seeing-seen. See through the structures and deconstruct step by step. The ultimate purpose and result are the same except mmk exposes all the very subtle and hidden cognitives

obscurations that we are unable even post anatta insight. So if one is interested in bringing anatta insight to maturity and perfection, mmk is needed.

Soh quoted from book:

Tsongkhapa notes that yod min (lit. “existing-not”) means nonexistent (med pa) while med min (lit. “not-not-existing”) effectively means existent, and accordingly he interprets the first alternative to mean “not existent ultimately” and the second to mean “not nonexistent conventionally.” 491 Otherwise, Tsongkhapa claims, this view would be none other than that of the “Chinese Hashang.” To empty the mind of all concepts of existence, nonexistence, etc., does not constitute discriminating wisdom (prajñā, shes rab), which should be acutely aware of what exists and what does not exist. This kind of emptiness is simply a state of unawareness. In the LRC Tsongkhapa expresses the opinion that most traditions in Tibet had deviated to this extreme. What needs to be negated, he asserts, is not all conceptuality whatsoever, but the false apprehension of true existence (bden ’dzin). By refuting the object of that mistaken concept and focusing upon its emptiness of true existence, one realizes the nature of reality. Having properly identified the apprehension of true existence, it is readily apparent that there are many concepts (rtog pa) that do not involve apprehension of the true existence of self or phenomena. This refutes the position that all concepts are to be refuted. 492 Tsongkhapa and Go ram pa evidently understand the relationship between conceptuality and the apprehension of true existence differently. Go ram pa understands conceptuality ipso facto as involving apprehension of true existence, whereas Tsongkhapa does not accept that conceptuality is always associated with the apprehension of true existence. 493 Go ram pa agrees that the object of the apprehension of true existence must be refuted. But to maintain that the mere absolute negation that is the nonfinding of that object through rational analysis is the definitive ultimate (don dam mtshan nyid pa), 494 and to maintain that clinging to or apprehension of that emptiness is not an object of refutation, 495 is “alien to the Mādhyamika textual tradition” (dbu ma’i gzhung lugs las ’das). Go ram pa quotes several Indian sources that support his contention that a definitive view is beyond verbal-conceptual formulation. The definitive ultimate is realized non-dualistically by sublime beings’ meditation (āryasamāpatti, ’phags pa’i mnyam bzhag). He also quotes Candrakīrti to the effect that deceptive reality (saṃvṛti, kun rdzob) is the object of false seeing. 496 Therefore, unlike the emptiness seen directly (pratyakṣena, mngon sum du) by sublime beings, the emptiness of absolute negation that is ascertained by inferential reasoning (anumāna, rjes dpag) is just deceptively true. 497 One might object that in some contexts the ultimate reality is said to be the mere absolute negation of emptiness, and that both realities are posited only by a worldly mind (’jig rten pa’i blo) 498— which seems to imply that it is incorrect to define the ultimate as the object of sublime equipoise. In reply, Go ram pa explains that truthlessness is realized in relation to a mind that apprehends true existence, and the designation of “ultimate reality” there refers to a conceptually formulated ultimate. The reason that designation is made is because its referent, the conceptually formulated ultimate, is the object of a mind that understands (rtogs) the nature of reality instead of (lit., “in relation to”— la ltos par) apprehending true existence. It is necessary to call the conceptual ultimate “ultimate” because it must be realized prior to realizing the nonconceptual ultimate (aparyāyaparamārtha, rnam grangs ma yin pa’i don dam). To claim that a conceptual object, which is apprehended as the absence of true existence by negating true existence, is the definitive ultimate (don dam mtshan nyid pa), is to confuse the concept (sāmānyalakṣaṇa, spyi mtshan) of the ultimate (a pointing finger) with the ultimate per se (the moon). 499 The implication is that if the conceptual ultimate is designated and accepted with reference to a worldly mind (’jig rten pa’i blo), then there is no reason why the nonconceptual, definitive ultimate should not be defined in relation to a nonconceptual mind, which is sublime gnosis. Thus, Go ram pa does not deny that reasoning and concepts are necessary in realizing the nature of the ultimate. He grants a propaedeutic function to the*

conceptual formulation of emptiness but does not accept that the Gelug formulation of emptiness as absolute negation qualifies as a definitive ultimate. This follows logically from his assumption that conventional reality is pervaded by conceptuality and that conceptuality is pervaded by ignorance. 500 Thus, any concept— even a concept of the mere absence of inherent existence— is not a definitive ultimate. 6.3.1.2.2. Go ram pa on Meditative Practice Go ram pa's critique of Tsongkhapa's approach to meditation is based on the implication that clinging to (zhen pa) or apprehending (' dzin pa) emptiness is not something to be abandoned. According to Go ram pa, Tsongkhapa reasons that if the apprehension of emptiness is only something to be abandoned, then there is no point in ascertaining it in the first place, as the antidote for apprehending true existence (bden par 'dzin pa). Go ram pa counters with several quotations from sūtras and śāstras, such as the famous statement of Nāgārjuna, The victors have taught emptiness To definitely eliminate all views.
Those who have a view of emptiness Are said to be incurable. 501

Pettit, John W.. Mipham's Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection (Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism) (pp. 139-140). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

[11:15 AM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: You agree more with tsongkhapa than gorampa on this point right
[11:35 AM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Yes so you must be clear. What does freedom from extremes entail? Tsongkhapa or the rest of the schools? Actually even in Gelug system, there is notional and non-notional ultimate. Non-notional ultimate is freedom from all elaborations and notional ultimate is DO and emptiness. Both are equally important. This is explored in Tsongkhapa ocean of reasoning. Therefore even Mipham 2 models of 2 truth is nothing new to Tsongkhapa.

Now even though all other schools emphasized on freedom from all elaboration, they then still qualify it does not mean this and that...🤣. It does not deny mere appearances...an so on and so forth...so it doesn't really differ much.

If you read mmk directly, there are two aspects that come out very clearly:
1. No essential nature
2. Freedom from conceptualities

You can go either way or integrate them.
[11:40 AM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[11:41 AM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Tsongkhapa emphasized and placed a lot on the importance of discerning wisdom of the conventional and the non-essential nature of phenomena while other schools emphasized the ultimate intention of mmk is freedom from all views.
[11:43 AM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: What book is this?
[11:45 AM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: *Pettit, John W.. Mipham's Beacon of Certainty: Illuminating the View of Dzogchen, the Great Perfection (Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism) (pp. 139-140). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.* Lol
[11:46 AM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[12:03 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: No wonder sounded so familiar
[12:03 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: 🤣🤣🤣
[12:03 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Lol
[12:05 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: After that you have to have mmk as well as prasannapada free from Tibetan scholars interpretations
[12:05 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Then your collections can be considered fairly complete to have an [un]bias study

[12:12 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. which translation of mmk should i read first?
[12:18 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: you should separate. Translation you should use Jay L. Garfield. Comment you should read Mark Siderits. I m still unable to find full version of prasannapada.
[12:19 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Subscribe to Scribd, they have both.
[12:20 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Means have a raw version of translated text from Jay Garfield. Easier to read.
[12:23 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[12:23 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Which is the best Translation for Nagarjuna's Mulmadhyamkarika

"I am currently reading about sunyata and MMK from SEP and IEP but they seem all over the place. I have one translation/commentary by Jay l Garfield. Is it any good? are there any better translations?

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4

BEST COMMENTS
Add a Comment

krodha
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2y
Ornament Of Reason: The Great Commentary To Nagarjuna's Root Of The Middle Way

(Garfield himself said that this translation renders his own translation obsolete.)

6
Reply
[12:23 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Page 3-83 of Garfield is the translation.
[12:23 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Krodha says garfield say his own translation is obsolete lol
[12:24 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Kyle
[12:24 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Translation or commentary?
[12:24 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: [deleted]
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2y
Garfield's translation is very good. Mark Sidderits's translation is also excellent and more recent. Why not use both? You can find free pdfs of Garfield's.

I would strongly recommend Jan Westerhoff's 'Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka: A Philosophical Introduction'. Where was that book when I first tackled Nagarjuna? A gleam in his mother's eye, apparently! ;-)

Good luck!

5
Reply

xugan97
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2y
Ocean of Reasoning contains a marginally updated translation by Garfield, and one that is more in line with Tsongkhapa's commentary in that book. Of course, you would prefer the older book by Garfield if you don't care about the commentary. Sun of Wisdom or The Middle Way if you want good explanations rather than the complete text.

2
Reply

ChanCakes
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2y
I haven’t read any translations but Jan Westeroff’s Nagarjuna’s Madhyamaka is a good work that’s goes presents Naharjuna’s arguments and their contexts. I definitely recommend reading it.
[12:24 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Kyle said translation but idk
[12:25 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: I think the translation is easy to read. But you can use others to 参考.
[12:25 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[12:28 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Jan westeroff is also quite insightful.
[12:28 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[12:29 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: But I have my own explanations 🤣🤣🤣
[12:29 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Coz many are presented not from experiential perspective
[12:30 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: You mentioned a kagyu book on mmk that is experiential?
[12:30 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Yes
[12:30 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: That mahamudra book is quite good.
[12:33 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: The karmapa’s middle way?

https://www.amazon.com/Karmapas-Middle-Way-Feast-Fortunate/dp/1559394889

[12:34 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: If emphasis is on primordial purity, then reading is skewed towards freedom from all elaborations which is very crucial. Infact mmk do suggest that.

If emphasis is on no essential nature, then reading can be both and conventionalities are as relevant as ultimate, non-conceptual and conceptual can be blended using the wisdom and insight of essencelessness.
[12:35 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Yes *(on: The karmapa’s middle way?)*
[12:36 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: This I think is intent of Tsongkhapa. Which I say is the dual purpose of the chariot analogy.
[12:37 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. so mmk is more on primordial purity? Tsongkhapa emphasis seems unique then
[12:38 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: No mmk actually emphasizes both and indeed Tsongkhapa is very insightful.
[12:39 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah there is a chapter in mmk that talks about how emptiness allows the conventional. Chapter on four noble truths

[12:41 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: That is why I told you to have a raw translation text of your own also. But it will take a while to get used to the different reasonings in mmk. So still a lot of research needs to be done. Start will chapter 1,2,7 first. They contain all the reasoning logics. Rest are just applying the same reasoning methods.

[9:35 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Timeless Deviation to the Nature of Knowables The meditation of inseparable phenomena and emptiness is called “emptiness endowed with the supreme aspect.” Not knowing how emptiness and interdependence abide in nonduality, you decide that emptiness is a nothingness that has never existed and that is not influenced at all by qualities or defects. Then you underestimate the cause and effect of virtue and vice, or else lapse exclusively into the nature of all things being originally pure, primordially free, and so forth. Bearing such emptiness, the relative level of interdependence is not mastered. In this respect, this is what is known as mahamudra: one’s basic nature is unoriginated and, since it is neither existent nor nonexistent, eternal nor nil, true nor false, nor any other such aspects, it has no existence whatsoever. Nonetheless, its unceasing radiance arises as the relative level of all kinds of interdependence, so it is known as emptiness having the core of interdependence and interdependence having the nature of emptiness. Therefore, emptiness does not stray to the nature of knowables. In the Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way it is said: Anything that doesn’t arise dependently Is a phenomenon that has no existence. Therefore anything that is not empty Is a phenomenon that has no existence. And as said in the Commentary on Bodhichitta: It is taught that the relative plane is emptiness, And emptiness alone is the relative plane.” – The Royal Seal of Mahamudra, Volume 2
[10:07 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: 👍
[10:10 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Emptiness is ultimate nature whereas the radiance of clarity is relative as illusionariness of appearance arising dependently.
[10:12 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Mahamudra seems to be in line with Tsongkhapa thought.
[10:12 PM, 6/3/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[10:13 PM, 6/3/2021] John Tan: Actually Mipham also. However they seem to suggest the ultimate purpose of mmk is to cease conceptualities.

[10:01 PM, 6/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Nāgārjuna states:

"When the perfect vidyā sees
That things come from ignorance as condition,
Nothing will then be objectified,
Either in terms of arising or destruction...

...Since the Buddhas have stated
That the world is conditioned by ignorance,
Why is it not reasonable [to assert]
That this world is [a result of] conceptualization?

Since it comes to an end
When ignorance ceases;
Why does it not become clear then
That it was conjured by ignorance?"
[10:02 PM, 6/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Nagarjuna seems to see the end goal as the exhaustion of all phenomena through the dissolution of ignorance and its conceptualization

[10:09 PM, 6/4/2021] John Tan: I have told you there are 2 purposes already. Cessation of conceptualization in what sense? If cessation of conceptualization is enlightenment, then any one that sleep or fainted is enlightened.
[10:14 PM, 6/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: its analytical cessation through wisdom
[10:27 PM, 6/4/2021] John Tan: What does this wisdom involved? Seeing through is one thing, realizing is another? What is realized? The nature of mind/phenomena? Uncompounded and unconditioned? Non essential nature? What does understanding the unconditioned and uncompounded or essencelessness tell us? How is this linked to conceptualities?
[10:29 PM, 6/4/2021] John Tan: Then when you come face to face of your nature you know and will understand.
[10:32 PM, 6/4/2021] John Tan: Also go slow, it is not a one day thing. Be patient and allow mmk to slowly integrate with your insights. No need to rush. Analyse and at the same time be effortlessly in non-dual anatta, one say everything studied in mmk will become clear.
[10:54 PM, 6/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[11:03 PM, 6/4/2021] John Tan: It is like me studying mmk. The thinking mind may assume that it already knew most of the stuff post anatta so don't let ego get in our way.
Only when you come face to face with all the cryptic verses you began to understand that mind is still block and hinder by lots of constructs similar to self/Self in a deep way. If we are sincere then we go further to penetrate and release the deep tendencies. After some time there is really nothing much to read, most of the line of reasoning are known, just how much effort you put in to make it as an experiential insight.

If you were to approach mmk like me in the earlier years, 10-15 years can past and still nothing gain. Why? Because without having a focused mind, sincerity and reverence heart, merely reading and picking here and there a bit, how will genuine insight dawn?
[11:13 PM, 6/4/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..

[12:16 PM, 6/6/2021] John Tan: Do you understand my 10 points?
[1:30 PM, 6/6/2021] Soh Wei Yu: think so.. emptiness does not negate conventional
[1:30 PM, 6/6/2021] Soh Wei Yu: was just reading through some of kyle old posts which i like
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/06/the-ultimate-nature-of-phenomena.html
[1:30 PM, 6/6/2021] Soh Wei Yu: one of his posts:

Kyle Dixon

It is important to understand the concept of 'conventional truth' in Buddhism, because you may ask why these texts are stating that there is a 'self-nature' and a 'basis' and so on, why would they be doing this if these things are in fact unestablished and ultimately unreal? It is because the ultimate truth of things is their non-arising or emptiness, and what are those 'things' that are ultimately empty? They are conventions which are mistaken to be real things. So these alleged conventional objects are precisely what are realized to be unreal, and this means that we can relate to conventions freely because they are never pointing to anything actually 'real' or established. All conventions are simply useful nominal designations, tools for communication. The problem arises when we mistake these conventions to be something more than just a convention.

Conventions are reliable as long as they are not subjected to keen investigation. That is how 'convention' is defined per buddhism, a correct convention [tathyasaṃvṛti] is, according to Śāntarakṣita; "something can be tacitly accepted as

long as it is not critically investigated, that is characterized by arising and decay, and that has causal effectivity." So the validity of a convention is measured by its efficacy, if it appears to function correctly, then it can be accepted as a correct convention prior to its investigation. In the wake of investigating any convention it will fail, since conventions cannot withstand proper scrutiny.

So there is no problem stating that there is a 'self-nature', because when that convention is subjected to scrutiny that self-nature would be ultimately unfindable. Yet the term "self-nature" is a conventional designation that is pointing to the capacity of 'wisdom' mentioned above, which is completely free from the extremes of existence, non-existence, both and neither.

For instance, Longchenpa discusses that nature here:

"Mind itself [i.e., the nature of mind: tib. sems nyid] - naturally occurring timeless awareness [i.e., self-originated primordial wisdom: tib. rang byung ye shes] - has no substance or characteristics. Since it is empty yet lucid and free of elaboration, it cannot be conceived of as 'this' or 'that'. Although it can be illustrated by a metaphor - 'It is like space' - if one reflects on space as the metaphor, it proves to have no color, no shape, or anything about it that is identifiable. Therefore, if the metaphor being used does not refer to some 'thing', then the underlying meaning that it illustrates - mind itself, pure by nature - is not something that has ever existed in the slightest."

8 liked this (Wednesday, September 10, 2014 at 10:14am)
[1:32 PM, 6/6/2021] Soh Wei Yu: William kong realised anatta
[1:36 PM, 6/6/2021] Soh Wei Yu: therefore what is negated is not conventions per se nor their causal efficacy but the four extremes
[1:44 PM, 6/6/2021] Soh Wei Yu: also point 1 and 2... just like the Self, the Awareness seems so absolute and unchanging only due to a wrong view that misperceives luminous appearance into an inherently existing substratum, likewise the world seems so real and inherently existing due to an unexamined view of inherency that reifies and solidifies appearances
[1:59 PM, 6/6/2021] John Tan: What Kyle said is good. However that is not what Tsongkhapa key insight. you have to understand Tsongkhapa elevated the status of conventional that is dependent arising and emptiness of the conventional to equal the uncategorized ultimate. That is the categorized and uncategorised ultimate are of equal status. Means Pt 5 and 6.
[2:11 PM, 6/6/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[2:23 PM, 6/6/2021] John Tan: For the 3 other schools, the conventional that is based on conventions and conceptualities are to be discarded after seeing through much like post anatta insight into direct non-conceptuality and non-duality.

But why is conventional so important? As I have said many times Tsongkhapa did not dis-regard freedom from all elaborations and in his early days he did accept the ultimate purpose of mmk is freedom from all elaborations. Further he did mention about the categorized and the uncategorised ultimate, so the question is why did an accomplished master placed so much emphasis of the conventional?
[4:20 PM, 6/6/2021] John Tan: Many enters mmk without having direct taste of what emptiness of svabhava entails. Like what Westerhoff said:

"... give us very little insight into how the removal of such superimpositions could be possible and what it would entail.

The reason is obvious: according to the traditional Buddhist view, those who have realized (as opposed to merely understood) the absence of svabhāva and thereby emptiness are few and far between."
Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka Pg 51 by Westerhoff

So those having post anatta insight have the advantage to orientate themselves better and not get swayed by too much philosophical concepts and ideas about mmk and missed the essential points.

However getting used to how Nagarjuna structured his lines of reasonings and agrumentations can be a real pain initially if we do not have background why it is done that way. Nagarjuna was refuting the various views of his opponents and the major Buddhist systems of his time and frankly the tenets held by some of the major systems are still deeply ingrained in most modern people today including you and me. So going through mmk helps us uncover all these traits and put them into perspective with thorough investigations. This is the part where many ATR people will find difficulties when jumping into mmk as their approach was more of koan based -- direct and intuitive. The mmk on the other hand is opposite, very academic presented by the scholars even in the case of Westerhoff that is also why I din intro you his book. But he prompted many very important points like on page 126, Westerhoff said:

"The Mādhyamika therefore has to explain how we can account for an object changing and persisting through time without having to assume that there is some unchanging aspect of the object which underlies all change. Nāgārjuna claims that this can indeed be done. Understanding how this can be the case becomes particularly important in the context of the Buddhist conception of the self when the temporal continuity of persons has to be explained without reference to the concept of a persisting subjective core (ātman)."
Nagarjuna's Madhyamaka Pg 126 by Westerhoff

This is I think what Tsongkhapa clearly sees where many din where he creatively talk about how the mere-I takes rebirth.

Also in page 99, Westerhoff remarked:

"It also has to be noted that Nāgārjuna asserts, somewhat puzzlingly, that the absence of svabhāva, that is, emptiness, is not compatible with causation either"

This part is also important how should dependent arising be understood on top of the idea of "no essential nature".

So if you really want to understand what I meant by point 5-6 in my reply to William, you must understand these few questions.

Otherwise you can learn from mmk to see how dependent relations in terms of nominal and existential dependencies, agency-action, object-properties and cause-conditions-effect relationships help to
render svabhava as untenable.These reasonings will help the mind to release itself from grasping after svabhava in time to come. If the verses of mmk can go along with some vipassana exercises, that will be excellent. The combination will liberate the mind from all ghost images created by languages and conceptual superimpositions in a thorough and powerful way. Unfortunately this can't be found in books so you have to devise urself along the way...lol. 😂

Labels: Anatta, Emptiness, Madhyamaka, Nagarjuna 0 comments | |

“Yes, I think should add together as they represent the 2 different view of emptiness.

Freedom from all elaborations and freedom from self-nature.

Yeah I included the two. One is freedom from all elaboration, one is spacious dream-like nature, lack of self-nature as emptiness.” - John Tan 2022

[18/6/23, 1:07:21 AM] John Tan: 👍
No seer, no seeing, nothing seen means freedom from all elaborations into the natural state -- spontaneously presents and naturally perfected.

A state free from conceptual elaborations can be non-mentation like what Tsongkhapa said, there is no wisdom and insight involved. Insight of non-inherentness will result in direct taste non-existence clear appearances.

....

“Ultimately, the basis is free from all elaborations, no mind, no consciousness, no conditions therefore no DO, no emptiness...no line of demarcation can be drawn.

For a practitioner that has anatta insight, there is no issue on freedom from all elaborations of the ultimate, It is how the conventional is understood that is difficult.” - John Tan months ago

ManiThePainter

Posts: 130
Joined: Tue Feb 04, 2020 10:04 pm
Location: Vancouver, BC
Contact:
Contact ManiThePainter

Re: Best English Translation of Mulamadhyamikakarika

-

Post by **ManiThePainter** » Sat Feb 19, 2022 8:06 am

A new translation with Buddhapalita’s important commentary has recently been released. It’s been translated by Ian Coghlan.

Malcolm

Posts: 38994
Joined: Thu Nov 11, 2010 9:19 am

Re: Best English Translation of Mulamadhyamikakarika

-

Post by **Malcolm** » Sat Feb 26, 2022 7:26 am

Archie2009 wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 6:26 am
Nalanda wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 6:14 am The Siderits and Katsura one won the Khyentse Foundation prize 2014.
And the authors draw on all four Indian commentaries for their own commentary.
The Coughlin translation is my preference these days, 'cause Buddhapalita.

.....

It’s ok, Coughlin’s book is better. Buddhapalita is the definitive commentary on MMK.

....

Malcolm

Posts: 38994
Joined: Thu Nov 11, 2010 9:19 am

Re: Can you conceive of a scenario where it turns out Nagarjuna was wrong (ex: not all things are empty, or otherwise)?

-

Post by **Malcolm** » Sat Feb 26, 2022 8:15 pm

haha wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 7:35 pm
Malcolm wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 12:07 am
You clearly have not read a qualified commentary of the MMK. You have not done your homework. Get back to me when you have read Buddhapalita.
You are quite dismissive towards me for not reading Buddhapalita.

It is not possible to understand MMK without reading Buddhapalita, or, Bocking’s translation of the Pingala commentary preserved in Chinese.
Studying Nagarjuna’s other writings should be considered reading the qualified materials for the MMK.
Not if you are unable to identify who is saying what to whom in the text, for example, Kalupahana’s stillbirth of a translation utterly misconstrues nearly all of MMK because he tried to understand the text without relying on Buddhapalita. You have also misconstrued exactly the same points he did. Therefore, read Buddhapalita and get back to me. You will thank me.

Jun
04
The Karmapa's Middle Way: Feast for the Fortunate (The Nitartha Institute Series)

https://www.amazon.com/Karmapas-Middle-Way-Feast-Fortunate/dp/1559394889

- John Tan
  André A. Pais read the downloaded sample version Feast for the Fortunate and I like it very much, bought the kindle version. Very lucid presentation and unbiased in his commentaries even when involving other schools of thought eg...Gelug. Indeed very fortunate to have commentaries with experiential insights from 9th Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje of Kagyu tradition on madhyamakavatara.
  👍

Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, H.H. The 9th Karmapa Wangchuk Dorje, Madhyamaka, Mahamudra
0 comments | |

“[10:59 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: Like when you deconstruct self, you do not deny clarity. you realize clarity is

empty and effortlessly, directly taste whatever appears. Similarly, deconstruction of apparent object does not deny apparent object. Just the conceptual layer that separates disappear.
[11:02 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: How how you want it to be understood and articulated at the conventional level is dependent how the pedagogy, view and practice. It just has to relinquish our obscurations from the view and praxis.
[11:04 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: Like anatta, the two stanza to me can more directly release the self by direct seeing. However it is not structured in the form of 2 truth and not as systematic and thorough.
[11:12 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: But the view, path and result is not very different. We see through the self and realized it is a notion we have learnt, the mental constructs self is seen through, the purity and non-dual of emptiness and appearances is directly tasted. Perceiver and perceived is deconstructed, agency and action is seen through, object and characteristic are also seen through except not as thorough and systematic as how mmk trained the mind to see, however mmk may not provide the conditions the sudden triggering insight to arise.
[11:24 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: Like in prasangika mmk, the non-affirming negation, in the phases of insights approach of the 2 stanzas, one is not interested in the affirmation, just the thorough deconstruction of self construct. The seeing through of self in anatta is the direct experiential taste of non-dual, purity and spontaneity.
[11:39 PM, 5/23/2021] John Tan: So when someone describe to you, they say they have deconstruct self/Self but there is no direct taste of colors, smell, sensation, sound, no direct face to face of the radiance, pellucidity, purity, spontaneity, insubstantiality and non-duality of appearances, is that genuine authentication?
[12:00 AM, 5/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: No its not.. more like impersonality
[12:00 AM, 5/24/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Or nondoership”

“John Tan:

....Yes I do agree Arurag. However penetrating insight of the relationship between mental proliferation and the nature of appearances may not arise.

Exhaustion of background witness can come in the form of no-mind. It this case it will not be effortless as it remains as an occasional state since it is not realized as always and already so.

2. Seeing through self/Self without realizing the cause of it.

3. Seeing through self/Self by understanding the cause of it.

Now this seeing the cause by identifying the negandum is of relevance to Andre's summary of mmk.

If we are clear of this, we can train the mind to see how mental reifications proliferate and dwell deep into the nuance of "inherency" like separating existence, substance, self, production from whatever appears and the mind developed a keen and penetrating insight over time to the extend that it can penetrate all way up and down until ultimate emptiness is realized even through conceptuality. It is sort of the calculus of Buddhism.

So here I disagree with mipham although I have a lot of respect for mipham, I do think tsongkhapa is quite ingenious 🤣.

But is Tsongkhapa approach a good approach is a different question.

When we look at the mipham's debate with the gelugpas about freedom from the 4 extremes of existence, non-existence, neither and both, mipham did not adhere to any form of logical reasoning at all. In fact he discredited the way of using profane logic and reasoning to understand the ultimate emptiness.

So the host of inconsistencies and contradictions cited by gelugpas faced by tetralema negation due to double negation, excluded middle and non-contradiction do not apply at the level of ultimate emptiness.

To mipham, the whole purpose of freeing oneself from the extremes is not to deduce a resultant that satisfies the tetralemma. Even in gelugpas case of adding the qualifiers to first and second lemma only satisfy first two and not all 4. In fact, conclusion drawn from negating the 4th lemma is absurd and negating it with qualifiers added will result in emptiness as both inherently existing and conventionally non-existence.

So to mipham, the purpose is purely non-affirmative negation. Sort of any form of "yes I got it" from conceptuality is negated and going through the 4 lemmas of negation cover all ground of conceptual loopholes where the mind can grasp or rest.

Also prasangika "having no interest in the conventional except for refuting them mercilessly" is also imo incorrect. That is conventional is not refuted, things exist conventionally but are empty at ultimate level. In fact the term mipham use is "coalescence" and seeing union of emptiness and appearances is key. This navigation between conventional and ultimate into coalescence is the crux of wisdom. I rem Mipham remarked that it is a matter of fine tunning in his polemics with the gelugpas, nothing significant in essence. To mipham, there is no need to invent "inherent existence" for negation on top of the conventional things causing confusions and insert qualifiers that do not appear in the sutras. What should be negated' at the ultimate level is the very thing we experienced in daily life (conventional), not some "inherent existence". It must be understood that the negation of phenomena at the ultimate level does not invalidate them conventionally. The two levels -- non existence at ultimate and existence in conventional, do not contradict each other unless one misunderstood what exist conventionally must exist ultimately and what does not exist ultimately must not exist conventionally which is a substantialist view.” – John Tan, 2020

Michael Hernandez that is another problem. Let's take all 3 major representatives -- Mipham of Nyingma, Tsongkhapa of Gelug and Dharmakirti of Yogacara. Each has his own definition. To Dharmakirti, linguistic and inference cognition is conceptual, perception is non-conceptual. Mipham has 3 categories of conceptualities if you studied them, I shall not elaborate here. To Tsongkhapa, all cognitions both conception and perception are conceptual. That is why Tsongkhapa sees everything as dependently originated and conventional and negation of intrinsic as ultimate as nothing isn't conceptual and dependent.

Yet the so called "conceptuality" they all agreed that when dissolved that will give rise to non-conceptual gnosis is actually "the very subtle tendency to dualify" which imo is no different from "inherent existence".

As for me, after all these years of sorting out I prefer to retrict "conceptual" definition to mental activities that relate to linguistic, mental inference and labelling which is closer to our daily usage. I do not consider deep karmic tendencies as "conceptual".

For the ineffable beyond speech, there is nothing that can be said as it is the termination of all words and the way of leaping to that can be by koan or by way of negation and deconstruction. We can also do somatic or energy practices.
[7:43 am, 06/11/2021] John Tan: Gilles Therrien Why isn't Heart Sutra points directly to the Heart but instead points to freedom from all elaborations?
[7:43 am, 06/11/2021] John Tan: Do you know y?

Soh: oic... malcolm just said basically inexpressibility is like pointing to the lack of inherent existence.

malcolm:

Dharma is not a via negativa. Dependent origination = emptiness.

Inexpressibility simply means that we cannot point to anything and declare “this is how this appearance is.” It means there is nothing behind the relative to describe, and it means that descriptions of appearances fail to capture the reality of those appearances. But there is certainly nothing behind nor beyond them, just as there is nothing behind a mirage, illusion, etc., but causes and conditions that lack inherent existence themselves.

....

There is no source, no pure love, or anything like it. The highest manifestation of consciousness is a person who has realized how things are 100%, in other words, a buddha.

Now, to the extent that Buddhas are motivated by love, the wish that sentient beings be happy, we can say they are embodiments of love. But there is nothing at all mysterious about that, just as there is nothing mysterious about a mother’s love for an only child.

Soh: no inherent existence is the key to experience the heart as all appearance. so emptiness is form

John Tan: Yes

John Tan: Here, "ineffable" is in the same vein as our inability to communicate the "sweetness" of sugar or the "sourness" of lemon, not about any transcendental ground that is beyond. ” – November 2021

“[11:51 pm, 09/01/2022] John Tan: This is another part you need to know. That is why following a proper tradition is imp. They can study mmk, then tantra for energy practice the. Dzogchen or mahamudra and see the link steps by steps.
For modern ppl, what they study and what they practice in spirituality is different. There is no unity in knowledge. Like there is science, there is biology, there is chemistry, there is psychology.
....
John Tan: You c when you deconstruct self, what you experienced?
Soh: presence and energy, non conceptual, direct
[12:01 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: When you deconstruct, you are directly in touch with pure appearance in it's primordial and natural state, what is it?
[12:02 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: Presence and energy as what dzogchen called basis.
[12:03 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: When you deconstruct mind and body, you are more and more into these..u taste energetic vibration, presence and aliveness.
[12:03 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: Directly
[12:08 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: In sutra mmk, you only need to c through constructs and then deconstruct until you are free from all elaborations and taste Ur primordial purity. The in between of all those energies issues that so many faced are not mentioned🤣.
[12:09 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: So you see most need to go into tantra to speed up and understand the energy system.
[12:12 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: But these practices are not scientific, they are like the conventional truth in 2 truth. Like I tell you to visual this light that melt into Ur body and carry all your negative energies...u think really there is light that melt in Ur body and carries the negative energies away?
[12:12 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: 🤣🤣🤣
[12:13 am, 10/01/2022] John Tan: It is not like that but if you practice properly accordingly, it works.
John Tan: Btw apparent you din read Mark Sitderits mmk? The cause and effect of mmk is not the same as the "cause and effect" of science. It is in his first chapter of mmk. So call me to intro you a book but din read. 🤦”

“Three Spheres, Spontaneous Presence

André A. Pais
9tuSpohnsordfeod ·
A lil reflection:
Reality is naturally untainted by the three spheres of subject, object and action. As Maitreya said:
"Any thought of ‘subject’, ‘object’ and ‘action’
Is held to be a cognitive obscuration."
There is no knower, known or knowing; no seer, seen or seeing; no perceiver, perceived or perception.
There is no knowing, seeing or perception, and yet appearances spontaneously radiate with a light of their own. This vivid clarity is the mind's nature arising as dependent origination. So, don't look inside seeking the nature of awareness - it is the moon itself, rising from behind the clouds.
It's like this that Dōgen is able to drop body and mind, and become actualized by the myriad things. Free from knower, known and knowing itself, there is no trace of awakening - for there is no sentient being to become awakened, nor insentient rock to remain asleep. And yet, this no-trace unfolds endlessly, for it is the nature of the natural state that its radiance spontaneously manifests.

[1:42 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: 👍
[1:44 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: Actually I thought Andre should already have such insight and experience last year
[6:29 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: I would say:

If there is no knowing, seeing or perception and yet appearances spontaneously radiates, then it should not be dependent origination, should be spontaneous presence.

If there is name and form (namarupa), there is consciousness then there is dependent origination.
Labels: Anatta, Emptiness, Spontaneous Presence 0 comments | |”

“[1:23 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: why spontaneous presence is important for anatta insight?
[1:24 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: Btw the phrase "spontanous presence" I used is not related to dzogchen. I don't know anything about Dzogchen...🤣
[1:28 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: without agent, what arises does not arise by manner of agency, self, control.... but via conditionality
[1:28 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: so naturally there is a sense of spontaneity, effortless, natural
[1:28 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: like non-doership but more than that
[1:29 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: more like self arising by total exertion
[1:32 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: you see the phrase "spontaneous presence" can be separated into two words:
1. Spontaneous = no doership = first stanza
2. Presence = second stanza
Spontaneous presence to me is perfection of the union of these 2 stanzas in AR anatta insight.
[1:40 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: So from anatta, then the in between dots (that is what I meant by connecting dots) to spontaneous presence and natural perfection. What are these dots?
[1:47 AM, 3/31/2021] John Tan: Mipham has 2 models of 2 truth and they are linked, this is exactly where the dots r. The notional emptiness will take the most time, freedom from all elaborations, coalesence, purity and equality =>> the spontaneous presence and natural perfection (言语道断) .
[2:12 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oh yeah was about to say about the presence part lol
[2:13 AM, 3/31/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..

Jayson MPaul

Soh Wei Yu
I'm interested in these phases: freedom from elaborations, coalesence, purity and equality. Do you have anything written on them that explains what they are?
Soh Wei Yu
Author

Jayson MPaul

No these are mipham’s teachings. It is in the book John tan asked me to read:
https://www.amazon.com/.../dp/0861711572/ref=mp_s_a_1_1...
I think it will be good for you to read too

▫ Jayson MPaul

Soh Wei Yu
excellent. I will start reading”

“Arthur Deller Like thoughts that manifest inadvertently, ridding or accepting only perpetuates the chain of dependent arisings. Although all appearances have no essential nature and liberates naturally, it is not easy to understand.

Therefore the 2 truth model is taught to pacify the mind. The model has undergone the refinements of many great minds and sages over the 2000 years, so don't waste their hard works. It will guide us towards the uncontrieved view albeit being only notional emptiness. 😁” – John Tan, 2021

“John Tan's Reply to Andre on Emptiness
Andre:

One may think that a laptop is empty because it *arose* dependent on conditions, but *now that it has arisen* it's actually 'here in front of us and is made of matter, it's black, it has a certain weight and it's square-shaped'.

Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
Instead of "empty because it *arose* dependent on conditions", should also contemplate deeply the opposite : empty therefore dependent on conditions are possible.
End-->-->-->-->

But we're told that the laptop is empty in the sense that it has *never arisen*. What could it mean?

Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
When we use the term "non-arisen", we are talking about the traditional two truth model so we must look at both the ultimate and conventional nature. In ultimate analysis the "laptop" is empty and non-arisen; conventionally the "laptop" arose and the only valid mode of arising is via causes and conditions.

We follow the view and its praxis until the nature of mind and phenomena is clearly understood analytically. Until gnosis (prajna) is able to intuitive emptiness free from extremes/conceptualities/all elaborations.

Take note that the path of non affirmative negation is only part of the story and to Mipham without seeing coalescence of appearance and emptiness, it is considered notional emptiness. He presents the 4 stages of Madhyamaka experiences as emptiness --> coalescence --> lack of elaborations --> equality.

It is a gradual approach where the insight and experience of former phase will form the foundation for the next phase to arise until the non-conceptual gnosis of spontaneous presence is realized.

What lies after is the pure, unfabricated, uncontrieved view of spontaneous presence which is inexpressible since it is beyond all notions and elaborations.

I think these 4 phases are extremely helpful pointers for ATR people post anatta insight. Before that, the nature of mind and phenomena is still unclear. For you, the insights and experiences are there but the view is still very weak and needs lots of refinement. This is not your fault, me included (🤣) as we start from koan and contemplate on short stanzas. However if you want to have firmed and stable progress, you got to keep refining your view.
End-->-->-->-->

I don't fully understand non-arising yet, but I'd say it means that the laptop isn't actually solid or made of matter, even as it's resting right in front of us and we touch it. If it was actually made of matter, then it wouldn't be empty - it would have an intrinsic characteristic. But we're told in the Heart Sutra that 'form is emptiness'. So, form itself is devoid of nature, so it isn't truly form - it only appears so. And if the form element is empty, no object can possess it as an intrinsic characteristic.

Since mind and matter originates in dependence, investigated mind instead of matter. Emptiness without

Moreover, the laptop being material depends on being perceived by a non-material consciousness, so its materiality doesn't stand alone; it must be cognized externally as to be established - it's not self-established. The same with its being square or 'in front of us'. Likewise, consciousness does not stand alone - it requires the laptop so as to be able to 'arise as perception of laptop'.

Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
One point to take note here is when Nagarjuna talked about dependency, it is not just nominal dependency but also existential dependency. Like the comment I made on Andre previous post:-

This undeniable conviction of "in here" is real and "undeniably exist" WITHOUT conceptual constructs is the "inherentness" that must be deconstructed. For without "externality", how does the sense of "internality" arise? If they are dependent, how could they exist truly?

The seeing through of their dependent designations also renders the seeing through of their existence.
End-->-->-->-->

That the laptop is square-shaped is a notion imputed onto the vivid clarity of experience. That it's black likewise; that it's out there too.

Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
Vivid clarity isn't within the scope of mmk. However Mipham has two models of two truth, one is the traditional madhyamaka 2 truth model and second is the authentic(non-dual non-inherent non-conceptual)/inauthentic experiential model. Andre's previous poem of equating DO with spontaneous presence belongs more to the second model.
-->-->-->-->

I think the point is to empty all appearances of any notion that we might want to impute on them. Why? It reduces grasping and thus suffering. And, importantly, it opens the door to the transformation of experience. We're told that, in full enlightenment, experience sheds off its 'mortal skin' of ordinary body-mind and transforms into enlightened bodies and wisdom. That can't happen if experience is framed in confined structures of subject and object, mind and matter, limited and unlimited, space and time, etc. We can't wake up from a dream while still believing some aspects of it to be real, even if we've seen through the dream-character and some parts of the landscape.

Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
Relating grasping and suffering to imputations is more than a matter of logical deduction.

We can deduced by asking:
how does the mind grasp at all when conditioned existence are seen through?

How does mind grasp when it is free from all fabricated notions and elaborations?

We may also conclude that in fact mind comes to a total cessation when it's free from all elaborations.

But from practice point of view (imo), we must be thoroughly convinced and taste through experience that each conceptual construct has a set of emotional weights associated with it. Be it "self", "phenomena", "arising", "production", "existence" ...etc. Some releases are as powerful as anatta and mind-body dropped, some are like putting down a heavy load and often accompanied by a light sense of joy. This point was very well described and articulated by Aditya Prasad.
-->-->-->-->

"Don't try to bend the spoon, it's impossible. Instead, realize the truth. What truth? There is no spoon."

Ans by John Tan-->-->-->-->
Tell Andre to eat his food with his "spoon"! 🤣

-->-->-->-->

Labels: Emptiness, John Tan, Madhyamaka, Mipham Rinpoche |”

John Tan said:

“Mipham has very high regards on Tsongkhapa and said clearly that Tsongkhapa is clear about freedom from all elaborations and coalescence but Tsongkhapa followers may not. Take note that freedom from all elaborations is nothing new to Tsongkhapa, in his early years he did accept freedom from extremes = freedom from all elaborations but only rejected it in his later years. Tsongkhapa is an extremely insightful and realized master, why did he do that? What has he realized that we failed to see? I definitely think it is worth exploring.

You see Tibetan scholars have this bad habit of first stereotyping and then follow up with strawman attacks to illustrate certain points. I have no idea why they have to do that🤣. The svatantrika-prasangika is one, Heshang Moheyan another (we know zen is nothing about promoting a blank state of mind). So when studying to refine our view, simply focus on the insightful points of what they are trying to convey; you can leave out the colorful sectarian polemics.

In ATR, anatta as experiential insight of seeing through "self" relinquishing the imagined, the layer obscuring and dualifying vivid appearances is gone, experience turns vivid, clear, non conceptual, non-dual, spacious and uncontrieved. This is the experiential taste and authentic model that Mipham is talking about.

However can you bring the same insight to all other phenomena and all other conceptual notions? you may think "That is exactly what vase empty of vase mean!". you may think you have understood but until you come face to face with mmk, you realized there are still so many subtle nuances of inherentness lingering deep in us. The mind is so deeply conditioned that even prolong period of non-dual, non-conceptual opening cannot effectively clear up all these subtle cognitive obscurations and discovering their relationships with the associated emotional obscurations is never ending as long as we are still in the journey. This is where a lil spice on the analytical part helps to open up the conceptual mind. So it is a balance imo.

I like Mipham as it is in line with ATR phases of insights but when I read Tsongkhapa, I also feel the beauty of his teachings. Understanding conventionalities is like the imprint of the footstep (convention) relinquishes with each step taken; in the end, there is no path and no steps. And in the end whatever learn about the conventional and its ultimate nature just naturally dissolve into a single taste, conceptual and non-conceptual don't seem to matter anymore.

As the Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra says,
The fabricated realm and the definitive ultimate
Are defined by the lack of sameness or difference.
Whoever imagines them to be the same or different
Is possessed of mistaken imagination.

But I m not sure whether that is the intent of Tsongkhapa but everyone's condition is different. This is how I feel it.”

“Hi Tao, the 2 stanzas of seeing through self/Self led to the direct face to face authentication of mere appearances as

one's radiance clarity and accompanying the anatta insight are these following experiences and realisations:

1. Non-conceptual
2. Non-dual
3. Non-inherent-ness
4. Coalescence emptiness and appearance
5. Purity and equality
6. Direct authentication of one's clarity as the dynamism of mere appearances.
7. Effortlessness and natural spontaneity

In fact all of what Mipham spelled out in the 4 experiences of mmk are all present and more in terms of direct experiential taste 🤣 but in terms of relinquishing the 2 obscurations it is still inadequate imo. Why?

Because the flaw logic of "inherent-ness" is not thoroughly seen through from all angles and depth of the union of emptiness and dependent arising has not been fully understood by the conceptual mind that rest upon a paradigm of "inherent-ness and duality". This point that sutra and tantra compliment each other is emphasized by Mipham which is unique and crucial imo.

Sometimes it is good and advisable to step backward and look. A backward step does not necessarily mean retrogression; contrary it can make one see much more clearly. Imo what ATR lacks is the missing dots that link the 2 stanzas through mmk analysis in which I m too lazy to write...haha 😜 ”

"André A. Pais:

ttSp2honnsorred ·
It's interesting to think how samsara can be theoretically defeated with the use of a single phrase, like the reasonings of 'neither one nor many', the 'diamond slivers', and dependent origination. Nothing whatsoever supposedly survives the serious application of those reasonings.
For example, the Lord of Death, huge as a mountain, dark as the night, could come and say to me, "I'm going to throw you into the deepest hell, and then into unsurpassable oblivion."
I then could say, "I see. But you, O Mighty One, the Master of All Things Dreadful, are you singular or multiple, are you one or many? If you're one, where exactly are you? If you're many, who are you then?
And I, the poor being that will suffer such destinies, have I arisen from self, others, both or causelessly? If arisen from self, that's just pointless and endless; from others, it's illogical and leading to randomness; from both, it's just double nonsense; and causelessly, it's equally illogical and leading to randomness.
Concerning that Unsurpassable Oblivion you mentioned, is it created or independently existing? If it's created, how is it unsurpassable? If it's independently existing, how can it accommodate me?"
The trick is turning this theoretical certainty into visceral and heartfelt conviction. To such conviction, the name 'peace' can be attributed.

John Tan:

Well said André A. Pais
I too have come to the conviction.
I finally understand that life and death is overcome not through remembrance of one's past life or OBE or residing in Self but by seeing first no difference of life and death then freedom from the entire notion of life and death.
gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svaha" - 2021

You Are Not God
Soh Wei Yu

shared a link.

Admin
· 8m ·
[9:19 AM, 12/4/2020] Soh Wei Yu: https://youtu.be/dFqj5cp6iOs

[9:42 AM, 12/4/2020] John Tan: Quite good, very good in fact until anatta. However emptiness part, still need refinement.
[9:55 AM, 12/4/2020] John Tan: Insights of emptiness of non-inherent existence vs freedom from extremes. Tsongkhapa VS Gorampa/Mipham are both about the fine nuance of emptiness. Different insights, different experiences but are both are very very deep and profound to understand the differents in experiences and views. Anatta deals with both but to integrate both, require some conceptual views. Actually mmk is a very important text however the way it is presented by most philosophers or translators are just horrible. It is linked to the 3 deconstructions of conceptualities I told you.

1 Comment

Comments

Soh Wei Yu
Related, 3 deconstructions:
- division
- inherency
- semantics
[5:48 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Keep seeing and tasting what appears are nothing real. Not only there is no sense of observer and observed, sounds, sensations and everything lost their "semantics" and "meanings" and fully absorbed as this empty non-arisen taste.

[5:49 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic...
[5:49 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: This is unlike just sound, colors...etc

[5:23 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: It just occurred to me
[5:23 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: The whole universe is just burning light of empty clarity. Its literally like a flame burning due to dependent origination. Its like rainbow but rather than static is dynamically changing and flickering yet without anything arisen or abiding or ceasing. No origination or destination can be found either. I think empty clarity is quite familiar to me by now but somehow this analogy just came up. Changing is also conventional of course
[5:36 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: There is no end to the depth on the illusionariness of what appears. Focusing on realness will only end up in pce.
[5:37 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. yeah. Actually pce is already like a natural state here. But its not pce with physicality but empty clarity. Lol
[5:40 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Do you feel like passing through walls and the whole realm are not in any dimension?
[5:41 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Thats what i dont understand. Malcolm yesterday related empty clarity to passing through walls. I cannot do it lol except maybe in lucid dreams or what
[5:42 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Did he say that?
[5:42 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah
[5:42 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Interesting
[5:42 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Lol what another coincidence
[5:42 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: 🤣🤣🤣
[5:42 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Lol
[5:43 PM, 11/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Whole realm are not anywhere... yes
[5:48 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: Keep seeing and tasting what appears are nothing real. Not only there is no sense of observer and observed, sounds, sensations and everything lost their "semantics" and "meanings" and fully absorbed as this empty non-arisen taste.
[5:49 PM, 11/15/2020] John Tan: This is unlike just sound, colors...etc

“If you keep investigating and get use to the line of reasoning DO and emptiness, the mind will eventually be free from the attachment of production, origination and existence. Then you realize how the "fear" and all the previous thoughts of production, origination and existence are related to "dualistic and inherent" view. However it is a very gradual and slow process of releasing, not like the sudden flash of insights like I AM or anatta. Once we are able to integrate these experiences, insights and the right view, progress will be firmed and faith will be strong.” – John Tan, 2020

“John Tan
With no "sense of" subject, there is no "sense of" object.
Both are impressions of conventionalities that arise dependently.
"Don't mind" means "doesn't matter", no if...then..., no cause and effect relationship.😜

2 · 19w
▫ Dieter Vollmuth
Or in other words:
"The whole world of subjects
and objects

is just interdependend thoughts
which does't matter"

1
▫ John Tan
No one minds (no mind) and doesn't matter is about freedom.
However are we also aware how hypnotized the mind is by the world of conventionalities and mental cosntructs? The journey towards freedom from conceptualities is also a journey of learning the "magic" of conventionalities and mental constructs on consciousness.
▫ Dieter Vollmuth
thoughts are the programming-language for virtual realities.
▫ John Tan
John 1:1 is the first verse in the opening chapter of the Gospel of John: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.😀”

Richard Cooper
He seems to keep getting clearer to me.
Stian Gudmundsen Høiland
> John Tan: Not only there is no sense of observer and observed, sounds, sensations and everything lost their "semantics" and "meanings" and fully absorbed as this empty non-arisen taste.
Well, hello!❤️

1
Alessandro Socio Migliori
What is a good commentary of mmk?

○

André A. Pais
I like Garfield's.

3
Stian Gudmundsen Høiland
I’ve read almost all of them, and the one by Mark Siderits & Shoryu Katsura is the most balanced and unbiased by far: https://www.amazon.com/Nagarjunas-Middle.../dp/1614290504
That isn’t always what you want though. Sometimes you want the author to weight in more heavily, and for that nothing beats Mervyn Sprung’s Lucid Exposition of the Middle Way.

AMAZON.COM

Nagarjuna's Middle Way: Mulamadhyamakakarika (Classics of Indian Buddhism)
Nagarjuna's Middle Way: Mulamadhyamakakarika (Classics of Indian Buddhism)

2
Alessandro Socio Migliori
Thanks

- André A. Pais
I've actually just started rereading the MMK with Garfield's commentary along with Siderits/Katsura. I find the latter very "lofty", going into little detail, although helpful at times. I'm only 2 chapters in though.

1
Tyler Jones
André, I would distinguish between a commentary and an explanation. A commentary need only clarify what the root text is actually saying, because it was often cryptic to save words and fit the meter. For instance Candrakirti wrote a commentary on MMK, and also his own text explaining Madhyamaka. I think Siderits is an exemplary commentary, and for an explanation I go to Westerhoff.

4 · 1d

- Soh Wei Yu
Author
JT said ”In terms of ranking, I prefer Jan Westerhoff, Garfield then Siderits. Like what Tyler said Siderits is more of clarifying what the root text is saying, his presentation is quite structured in point forms and the settings behind the text and opponent views help readers understand the root text better. Westerhoff went far beyond and many points are related to anatta insight but more from the philosophical angle. But what all these books lack is how it can help one breakthrough conceptualities, what exactly is mmk trying to arrive at. After studying mmk, how does it help in freeing our mind?”

4
Tyler Jones
There are a couple of things I really like about Westerhoff. The first is that his "Western philosophy" style exposition makes it easier for me to grasp the subtle points than the explanations by shedra trained khenpos/geshes that I have seen. I have the same praise for Garfield. The second is that he incorporates

Tsongkhapa's illuminating philosophical insights on various points without being a fully Gelug presentation, which is what Garfield gives.

“John TanMonday, February 9, 2015 at 9:46am UTC+08
jay garfield is about mmk, you should read commentaries from both gelug and other systems. Have one mmk from garfield, one book that is commented by non-gelug system and one that is by gelug scholars. Their understanding of freedom of extremes are quite different. Mipham comments are very good and can be used as representative for the other line of thoughts (non-gelug) without skewing to extremes and allow us to understand the wisdom of appearances. Mipham commentaries on madhyamakalankara (shantarikshita) is a good book as it provides background on yogacara of mind only schools and the view of svatantrika where as his commentaries on madhyamakavatara (chandrakirti) provides his view of prasangika. The book Jamgon Mipham provides a basic overall summary of his thoughts, a good book to start. Emptiness yoga is seriously not a good book imo...lol. But greg recommends it highly so when you are stuck, you can have some advices from him. This book is enough to tell you about the gelug view.
“

“....[20/8/18, 11:33:35 PM] John Tan: How you see yourself as you really are is a good read too
[20/8/18, 11:34:14 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Dalai Lama?
[20/8/18, 11:34:18 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ya I read before. It’s good
[20/8/18, 11:34:20 PM] John Tan: Yes
[20/8/18, 11:34:33 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Top recommendation by Greg lol
[20/8/18, 11:34:39 PM] Soh Wei Yu: He also made a commentary on that text
[20/8/18, 11:34:48 PM] John Tan: Is it?
[20/8/18, 11:34:51 PM] John Tan: Lol
[22/8/18, 10:25:03 AM] John Tan: After mmk, I realized it is all just anatta...lol although going in-depth on mmk helps to provide deeper understanding.
[22/8/18, 10:25:10 AM] John Tan: 🤣

(Sioh: Greg Goode has some good chapter summaries for this book in https://greg-goode.com/article/dalai-lama-summaries/)“

ManiThePainter

Posts: 130
Joined: Tue Feb 04, 2020 10:04 pm
Location: Vancouver, BC
Contact:
Contact ManiThePainter

Re: Best English Translation of Mulamadhyamikakarika

-

Post by **ManiThePainter** » Sat Feb 19, 2022 8:06 am

A new translation with Buddhapalita’s important commentary has recently been released. It’s been translated by Ian Coghlan.

Malcolm

Posts: 38994
Joined: Thu Nov 11, 2010 9:19 am

Re: Best English Translation of Mulamadhyamikakarika

-

Post by **Malcolm** » Sat Feb 26, 2022 7:26 am

Archie2009 wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 6:26 am
Nalanda wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 6:14 am The Siderits and Katsura one won the Khyentse Foundation prize 2014.
And the authors draw on all four Indian commentaries for their own commentary.
The Coughlin translation is my preference these days, 'cause Buddhapalita.

.....

It’s ok, Coughlin’s book is better. Buddhapalita is the definitive commentary on MMK.

....

Malcolm

Posts: 38994
Joined: Thu Nov 11, 2010 9:19 am

Re: Can you conceive of a scenario where it turns out Nagarjuna was wrong (ex: not all things are empty, or otherwise)?

-

Post by **Malcolm** » Sat Feb 26, 2022 8:15 pm

haha wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 7:35 pm
Malcolm wrote: ↑Sat Feb 26, 2022 12:07 am
You clearly have not read a qualified commentary of the MMK. You have not done your homework. Get back to me when you have read Buddhapalita.
You are quite dismissive towards me for not reading Buddhapalita.
It is not possible to understand MMK without reading Buddhapalita, or, Bocking’s translation of the Pingala commentary preserved in Chinese.
Studying Nagarjuna’s other writings should be considered reading the qualified materials for the MMK.
Not if you are unable to identify who is saying what to whom in the text, for example, Kalupahana’s stillbirth of a translation utterly misconstrues nearly all of MMK because he tried to understand the text without relying on Buddhapalita. You have also misconstrued exactly the same points he did. Therefore, read Buddhapalita and get back to me. You will thank me.

Also see: A Summary of Seeing that Frees by Rob Burbea

“Vasubandhu [in Abhidharmakośa]:

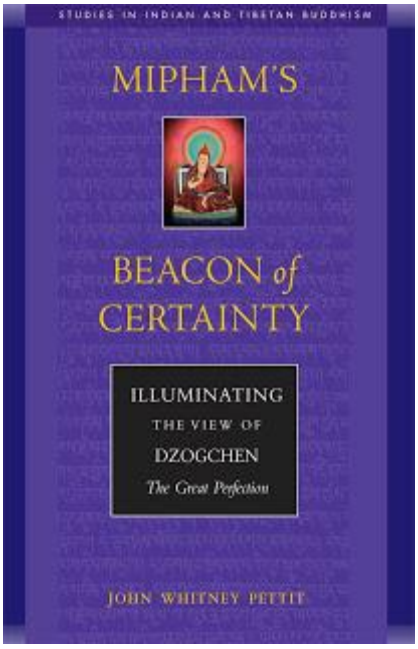
Resting in [proper] conduct
and equipped with study and reflection, one then engages in meditation.

....

Those endowed with ethics must then engage extensively in study. You may wonder why that is. In order to attain buddhahood, you must realize the actuality of twofold identitylessness. In order to realize that, you need to understand the scriptures and reasonings [that allow you] to understand the meaning of the Buddha’s words and the treatises [on it]. To understand those [scriptures and reasonings], you need to study. If you don’t, you will not understand the actuality of twofold identitylessness, and if you do not understand that, you will not know how to familiarize with identitylessness.
If you do not know how to familiarize with identitylessness, even if you practice meditation, the prajñā which arises from meditation will not arise. If that [prajñā] does not arise, it is impossible for the path of seeing of the noble ones to arise. If that [path] does not arise, it is impossible to attain Buddhahood, which is the culmination of [said] familiarization.

~ Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Thayé“

Book Recommendation: Beacon of Certainty



Link to Beacon of Certainty: https://www.amazon.com/Miphams-Beacon-Certainty-Illuminating-Perfection/dp/0861711572

[11:20 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: I need to find a day to write about mmk 2 truth model, the more I look at it the more beauty I see...lol
[11:21 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: It is fortunate that you have insight into anatta
[11:23 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: What you lack is a strong view to articulate the experiences and insights without falling into extremes.
[11:23 AM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[11:24 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: So far I can't find a teacher or books that can beautifully blend the whole thing together. Mipham is the closest I can get.
[11:26 AM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. was actually planning to read mipham book during my reservist
[11:35 AM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: Read beacon of certainty, dialectics you need to have some background
[12:14 PM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Ok
[7:24 PM, 3/26/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Andre wrote:

This [in the link] is a good introduction and "meaning commentary" to the text. I'm intending to read Beacon's root text and commentary, I've just read the long introduction by Petitt.

Soh Wei Yu also consider reading Mipham's introduction to Shantarakshita's Adornment of the Middle Way. I'm always saying this, I think it's pretty good. There's a lot of overlapping between these 2 texts.

https://www.amazon.com/Journey-Certainty-Quintessence-Dzogchen-Exploration/dp/1614290091/ref=mp_s_a_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=Journey+to+Certainty&qid=1616755380&sr=8-1
[7:34 PM, 3/26/2021] John Tan: Shantarashita adorenment is also good..and introduction to the middle way since you always like to talk about bhumis since the middle way is also chandrakirti's commentary on the bhumis. 🤣

Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, Dzogchen, Emptiness, Madhyamaka, Mipham Rinpoche 0 comments
||
Mar
24
John Tan's Reply to Andre on Emptiness

John Tan wrote:

Andre:

One may think that a laptop is empty because it *arose* dependent on conditions, but *now that it has arisen* it's actually 'here in front of us and is made of matter, it's black, it has a certain weight and it's square-shaped'.

Ans by John Tan -->-->-->-->
Instead of "empty because it *arose* dependent on conditions", should also contemplate deeply the opposite : empty therefore dependent on conditions are possible.
End-->-->-->-->

But we're told that the laptop is empty in the sense that it has *never arisen*. What could it mean?

Ans by John Tan -->-->-->-->
When we use the term "non-arisen", we are talking about the traditional two truth model so we must look at both the ultimate and conventional nature. In ultimate analysis the "laptop" is empty and non-arisen; conventionally the "laptop" arose and the only valid mode of arising is via causes and conditions.

We follow the view and its praxis until the nature of mind and phenomena is clearly understood analytically. Until gnosis (prajna) is able to intuitive emptiness free from extremes/conceptualities/all elaborations.

Take note that the path of non affirmative negation is only part of the story and to Mipham without seeing coalescence of appearance and emptiness, it is considered notional emptiness. He presents the 4 stages of Madhyamaka experiences as emptiness --> coalescence --> lack of elaborations --> equality.

It is a gradual approach where the insight and experience of former phase will form the foundation for the next phase to arise until the non-conceptual gnosis of spontaneous presence is realized.

What lies after is the pure, unfabricated, uncontrieved view of spontaneous presence which is inexpressible since it is beyond all notions and elaborations.

I think these 4 phases are extremely helpful pointers for ATR people post anatta insight. Before that, the nature of mind and phenomena is still unclear. For you, the insights and experiences are there but the view is still very weak and needs lots of refinement. This is not your fault, me included (🤣) as we start from koan and contemplate on short stanzas. However if you want to have firmed and stable progress, you got to keep refining your view.
End-->-->-->-->

I don't fully understand non-arising yet, but I'd say it means that the laptop isn't actually solid or made of matter, even as it's resting right in front of us and we touch it. If it was actually made of matter, then it wouldn't be empty - it would have an intrinsic characteristic. But we're told in the Heart Sutra that 'form is emptiness'. So, form itself is devoid of nature, so it isn't truly form - it only appears so. And if the form element is empty, no object can possess it as an intrinsic characteristic.

Since mind and matter originates in dependence, investigated mind instead of matter. Emptiness without

Moreover, the laptop being material depends on being perceived by a non-material consciousness, so its materiality doesn't stand alone; it must be cognized externally as to be established - it's not self-established. The same with its being square or 'in front of us'. Likewise, consciousness does not stand alone - it requires the laptop so as to be able to 'arise as perception of laptop'.

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-->-->-->-->

I think the point is to empty all appearances of any notion that we might want to impute on them. Why? It reduces grasping and thus suffering. And, importantly, it opens the door to the transformation of experience. We're told that, in full enlightenment, experience sheds off its 'mortal skin' of ordinary body-mind and transforms into enlightened bodies and wisdom. That can't happen if experience is framed in confined structures of subject and object, mind and matter, limited and unlimited, space and time, etc. We can't wake up from a dream while still believing some aspects of it to be real, even if we've seen through the dream-character and some parts of the landscape.

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We can deduced by asking:
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How does mind grasp when it is free from all fabricated notions and elaborations?

We may also conclude that in fact mind comes to a total cessation when it's free from all elaborations.

But from practice point of view (imo), we must be thoroughly convinced and taste through experience that each conceptual construct has a set of emotional weights associated with it. Be it "self", "phenomena", "arising", "production", "existence" ...etc. Some releases are as powerful as anatta and mind-body dropped, some are like putting down a heavy load and often accompanied by a light sense of joy. This point was very well described and articulated by Aditya Prasad.
-->-->-->-->

"Don't try to bend the spoon, it's impossible. Instead, realize the truth. What truth? There is no spoon."

Ans by John Tan -->-->-->-->
Tell Andre to eat his food with his "spoon"! 🤣
-->-->-->-->
Labels: Emptiness, John Tan, Madhyamaka, Mipham Rinpoche 1 comments | |

[4:27 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Now its quite clear to me the nature of presence as vivid form, as vivid and clear as it is, is nowhere to be found and completely equivalent to a reflection, totally groundless. It is free from extremes.. free from existence and nonexistence, not just inherent existence. Its not that there is something dependently existing with something else, but dependencies by their very nature is merely empty like reflections
[5:07 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Chariot makes more sense nowadays
[5:34 PM, 1/21/2021] John Tan: you still remember I told you there are two parts to emptiness, one is the release of mental constructs, the other is the taste of it?
[9:07 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah
[9:31 PM, 1/21/2021] John Tan: "Free from existence and non-existence, not just inherent existence..."
Actually what you must understand is the sense of "inherentness" is e "existence" or "non-existence".
[9:51 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Not sure i get what you mean
[9:51 PM, 1/21/2021] John Tan: Then go think about it. And that is only the conceptual release level.
[10:19 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. btw i also saw like there is no essence of being just like a chariot dissolves not only inherency but also division.. and i can see like everything is just traces of action. Thats why even a lineage of practitioners is like the traces of buddha etc.. yet there is no essence being passed on
[10:20 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: And there is no one just essenceless activities, actions and reactions.. even buddhas as well as all sentient beings. Although buddha actions are free from afflictions
[10:23 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Also i had some flash of insight or glimpse related to chariot before i fell asleep the other day but too bad didnt write down my thoughts after that lol

[10:32 PM, 1/21/2021] John Tan: The insight of absence is not a single flavor. That is the taste I want you to describe to me. If I write, then it is useless, there will be fabrication towards a certain experience. That is why I have been asking you for so many years and do not want to tell you more. No-self is also an insight of absence - not found. But is this the same flavor as unlocatibility and non-locality of presence not found? Mind-body dropped is also an insight of "not found", when you look for the body, nothing is found, so what is the taste like?
Have you ever wonder why prajna paramitas so many "no this and that, no eyes..."....do you know the taste of "no suffering"? What about "no life and no death"?
Then at the conceptual level of release, what is about?
[10:58 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: No self is not the same as nonlocatibility of presence. After no self, background is gone, but the foreground can be still be “here” or “there” and there is still a subtle grounding. If aggregates are seen to be completely empty, unfindable and nonlocal, there is no grounding at all nor some “single taste” to return to.. if there is anything that can be grasped or affirmed at all it is still the illusion of findability. the diversity of appearance has no ground to ground in. It is a release into nonreferentiality.. appearances are luminous but with a taste that is selfliberating and illusion like
[10:59 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Mind body drop taste is more like all boundaries and division and weight release into boundlessness, contourless and weightless
[11:01 PM, 1/21/2021] John Tan: So when I say "not found" is more tasty, it wasn't meant to be a teasing comment. 🤣.
[11:01 PM, 1/21/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Lol ic..

[1:41 AM, 1/30/2021] John Tan: What is more important is the one taste of spaciousness having different flavours.
...

Arcaya Malcolm: "In order for one thing to depend on another thing, one thing must arise upon which another must depend. But this does not solve anything. Why? Since the arising of even one thing cannot be established, there is no arising. Everything which appears is merely a unconditioned self-apparent display nondual with an unconditioned self-originated pristine consciousness."

"Pristine consciousness is not a product of causes and conditions since no causes and conditions can be found at all. If you insist that the only thing that exists are things produced out of causes and conditions, your view is really no better than realism, and betrays an inner attachment to a self of persons and things."

"Pristine consciousness is not the same consciousness as the deluded consciousness, but you can say that the eight consciousnesses arise from mistaking the nature of self-originated pristine consciousness for being a self."

"Mañjuśrīmitra states:

> It may be said, “The way all this is produced is dependent origination, arising and ceasing.”
> Like a burnt seed, a nonexistent is not produced from a nonexistent; the cause and the result do not exist.
> The mind that clings to entities and clings to cause and result
> itself appears as cause and condition, but because those are nondual, there is no arising and perishing.

Because there is no arising and perishing, there is no self and other. Because there is no death and transmigration, there is no permanence and annihilation.

Therefore, there is no delusion or samsara. In fact, there is also no nirvana."

"Yes, and this is why we can say that pristine consciousness is unconditioned:

The mind that clings to entities and clings to cause and result
itself appears as cause and condition, but because those are nondual, there is no arising and perishing."

"Pristine consciousness (jñāna) is the dharmatā of the mind or the cittatā of citta, inseparable clarity and emptiness." – Arcaya Malcolm, Clarifications on Dharmakaya and Basis by Loppön Namdrol/Malcolm

“[2:27 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Chapter 25
Engaging in Discernment
25.1

“Young man, how do bodhisattva mahāsattvas who practice that discernment of phenomena, who view phenomena as phenomena, attain the highest, complete enlightenment?

“Young man, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who practice that discernment of phenomena, who view phenomena as phenomena, do not perceive enlightenment as other than form. They do not approach enlightenment as other than form. They do not seek enlightenment as other than form. They do not attain enlightenment as other than form. They do not inspire beings to an enlightenment that is other than form. They do not see a tathāgata as other than form. They see a tathāgata in this way: ‘The Tathāgata is the fearlessness that is the nature of form.’ They do not see the tathāgata as other than form, as other than the nature of form. They do not see the nature of form as other than the tathāgata. The nature of that which is called form and that of the tathāgata are nondual. The bodhisattva mahāsattvas who see in that way are engaging in the discernment of phenomena.

[long quote cut https://read.84000.co/translation/toh127.html]
[2:36 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: What do you understand from it?
[5:23 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Now looking at the thousands on droplet on window.. each reflecting all surroundings... nothing has inherent essence besides the merely dependently originating appearance.. pure appearance is like mere designation without referent like chariot. Means appearing without core or essence just like designated entities are designated dependent on various conditions without essence
[8:47 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Also i see why you said a thought or phenomena is neither arising nor non arising but nonarising due to dependent origination.. for example a form that depends on eye and other countless conditions cannot be said to come from anywhere, go anywhere or have come into being anywhere. Its nature is just like chariot.

Such a form is only merely designated and appearing in dependence on all those factors.. have no real existence of its

own, not truly originated, coming or going

It is not arising or truly existent, it is also not non existent or totally nonarising, but rather it is phenomena that is free from existence or nonexistence or inherent production but dependently originating

It is also not about it being dreamlike or merely appearing, rather it is about the essencelessness of dependent origination
[8:50 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Therefore to truly comprehend the nature of form is to comprehend its dependent origination and emptiness simultaneously
[8:51 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Because of the sutra?
[8:51 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Was contemplating just now and occurred to me
[8:52 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: What about your experience?
[8:54 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: What about the spontaneous display when expressed conventionally is DO and emptiness. How do you understand spontaneous display as DO and emptiness? How do you relate convention and the ultimate?
[9:03 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: The spontaneous display is what i had in mind when i say nature of form is dependently originating and empty.. the vivid vision of red flower is not located inside the flower, in the eye, in anywhere.. it is not truly arisen but is a vivid presence that is free of extremes and expressed conventionally as DO

All phenomena are conventionally dependently originating, ultimately empty clarity free from extremes
[9:10 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Quite good.
[9:15 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Try not to be too intellectual now, feel everything with your whole body mind naturally.
[9:17 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Don't feel with your head or your eyes...lol. feel with your whole body. That is your mind too.🤣”

“[11:33 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: i think mmk is a little confusing to navigate to treat it like a koan.. anatta is very simple because its just bahiya sutta, or two stanzas, more focused lol
[11:33 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: mmk has like so many reasonings
[11:33 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: dunno what to focus on 🤣

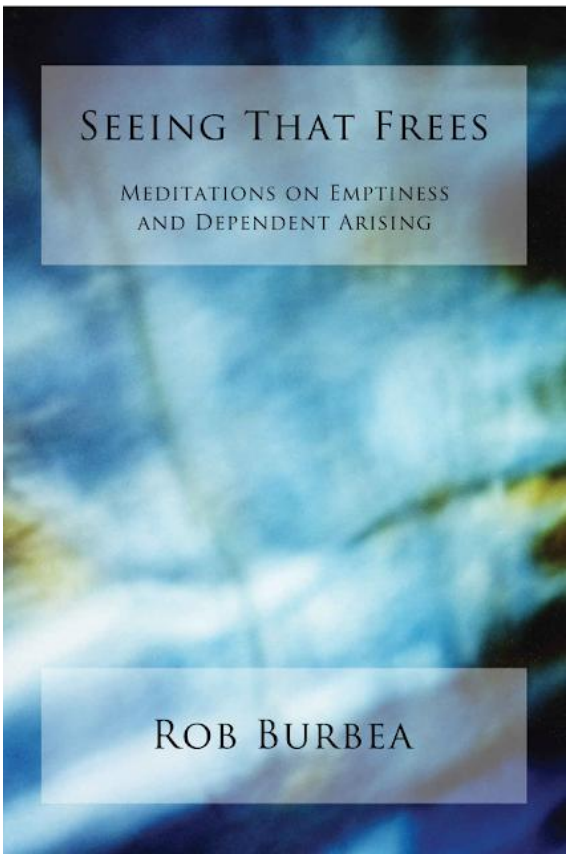
[11:34 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Yes. I am thinking of writing something about it.. lol to get people into orientation.
[11:38 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Mmk is a bit clumsy and many sees the purpose as cessation of conceptualization. However I treat it as koan triggering insight that can be authenticated in real time. For those that has not idea of how anatta can be triggered from the 2 stanza, it will be unfamiliar to them.
[11:39 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: But mmk is a very thorough deconstruction teaching.
[11:39 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Many only sees emptiness and not see DO. They treat DO arising only when ignorance is present.

[11:52 PM, 6/14/2020] Soh Wei Yu: “I pay respect to the best among speakers who, having attained Enlightenment, has taught relative origination (Pratītyasamutpāda) which is no-cessation, no-origination, no- annihilation, no-abiding, no-one-thing, no-many-thing, no-coming-in, no-going-out; being the termination of linguistic description (Prapañcopashamam), it is the good (Shivam)” - Nagarjuna [Ram Candra Pandey & Mañju, 1999, pp.1].

[11:52 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: Yes
[11:53 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: The last sentence being the termination of linguistic description ...many take it to mean doing away of conceptualization.
[11:56 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: You must intuit the spontaneity of this manifestation, this display...from no where and does not go anywhere...
[11:57 PM, 6/14/2020] John Tan: These continuously springing out...DO is the koan of this authentication.

[12:08 AM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: Sentient being see production from cause and conditions but they do not see non-production, they see true production.
[12:09 AM, 6/15/2020] John Tan: When it is non-origination is realized from origination in dependence, that is DO.”

“



André A. Pais

50m ·

https://julyandavey.com/books/seeingthatfrees/
A summary of Seeing that Frees by Rob Burbea.

[11:59 PM, 8/10/2020] John Tan: This is a really good quality book by Rob Burbea. Easy to read, lots of tips for practice and full of valuable pointers. Should put into our blog, preferably "must read" section.
[12:00 AM, 8/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: you mean the summary or the book itself?
[12:00 AM, 8/11/2020] John Tan: Summary
[12:01 AM, 8/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: ok i post
[12:03 AM, 8/11/2020] John Tan: Almost attempts to integrate everything... Lol
[12:04 AM, 8/11/2020] John Tan: Maybe I should buy the book...but the section on cause and effect and production is too short.
[12:05 AM, 8/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: ya i think so.. i remember hale oh likes it very much i think
[12:05 AM, 8/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: too bad rob burbea died recently from cancer
[12:08 AM, 8/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: haven't read the book before though. think will get it
[12:08 AM, 8/11/2020] John Tan: Yes. Go read about the summary... you will understand why it is good guide for practice.

Link to buy the book: https://www.amazon.com/Seeing-That-Frees-Meditations-Emptiness-ebook/dp/B00SI7PQD8 ”

“A woman sees her beautified face

On the surface of a mirror or a bowl of oil.
The fool feels passion for it
And runs in search for the desired.

{9}“The face was not transferred there.
The face will never be found in the reflection,
And yet fools have desire for it.
Know that all phenomena are like that. {10}

“Just like optical illusions and fata morganas,
Just like dreams and just like illusions,
When their attributes are meditated on,
their nature is empty.
Know that all phenomena are like that. {11}

“When the moon is in a clear sky,
Its reflection appears on the sea,

But the moon has not moved onto the water.
Know that all phenomena are like that. {12}” - The Samadhirāja Sūtra

“All phenomena are without location; They have no location that can be known. For the one who knows this about their location, Enlightenment is not difficult to attain.” - The Samadhirāja Sūtra

“Emptiness is the 'nature' of all experiences. There is nothing to attain or practice. What we have to realize is this empty nature, this ‘ungraspability’, ‘unlocatability ’ and ‘interconnectedness’ nature of all vivid arising. Emptiness will reveal that not only is there no ‘who’ in pristine awareness, there is no ‘where’ and ‘when’. Be it ‘I’, ‘Here’ or ’Now’, all are simply impressions that dependently originate in accordance with the principle of conditionality.” – Thusness (John Tan) Stage 6

“(10:32 PM) Thusness: it is this is, that is
(10:32 PM) AEN: ya
(10:32 PM) Thusness: this and that can be billions of light years away
(10:33 PM) Thusness: but when conditions is, that arise
(10:33 PM) Thusness: regardless of space-time continuum
(10:33 PM) Thusness: space and time are mental construct
(10:34 PM) Thusness: so when one first experience what Awareness is, it begin to get in touch with the Real.
(10:34 PM) Thusness: with sometime very very real
(10:34 PM) Thusness: then it realises timelessness
(10:34 PM) Thusness: but there is still doubt
(10:34 PM) Thusness: because the clarity cannot go beyond certain level.
(10:34 PM) Thusness: what is now?
(10:34 PM) Thusness: what is here?
(10:35 PM) Thusness: all are thought constructs.
(10:35 PM) Thusness: we only have a feeling, an impression of what they are
(10:35 PM) Thusness: because we 'think'
(10:36 PM) Thusness: but when we de-cognized and train ourselves to see in bare
(10:36 PM) Thusness: we experience timelessness
(10:36 PM) AEN: oic de-cognize means?
(10:36 PM) Thusness: in this very instant
(10:37 PM) Thusness: means we relinquished thoughts and concepts about anything
(10:37 PM) Thusness: willingly give up all these things and touch 'things' directly
(10:37 PM) Thusness: and that touching is really awareness
(10:38 PM) Thusness: it is the depth of clarity of this that will bring you insight.
(10:38 PM) Thusness: and later you realised its emptiness nature
(10:39 PM) Thusness: as in everything is unborn, has no where, you do not know where it is stored, where is the center, you cannot pinpoint

(10:39 PM) Thusness: this has to do with the degree of clarity
(10:39 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:39 PM) Thusness: and it is only in the moment of arising and ceasing, instantaneously it is gone
(10:40 PM) Thusness: that moment is all there is, all experiences of our pristine awareness is and right at the moment.
(10:40 PM) Thusness: a moment inherit all of the past
(10:40 PM) Thusness: but a thought bound mind is always chaining
(10:40 PM) Thusness: linking
(10:40 PM) Thusness: chaining meanings and thoughts
(10:41 PM) Thusness: like it tries to understand what 'time' is according to science, according to concepts
(10:41 PM) Thusness: therefore it cannot experience what a mystic experiences
(10:41 PM) Thusness: the timelessness of it.
(10:41 PM) AEN: icic
(10:42 PM) Thusness: and going deeper and deeper and clearer and clearer within an instantaneous moment
(10:42 PM) Thusness: as if a point contain all
(10:43 PM) Thusness: that is why you asked me a year back why i said about the 10 dimension is like the reality i experienced
(10:43 PM) Thusness: buddha tried to explain conditionality
(10:43 PM) Thusness: no time, no space, no center, no where
(10:43 PM) Thusness: only a moment of arising and ceasing
(10:44 PM) Thusness: this is the nature of all.
(10:44 PM) Thusness: depending on the depth of clarity, the insight differs
(10:44 PM) Thusness: many stop at the timelessness like most mystic and cannot go beyond that
(10:45 PM) Thusness: at most they can do is to reach death within life
(10:45 PM) Thusness: but the ultimate meaning is not known.
(10:45 PM) AEN: reach death within life means?
(10:45 PM) Thusness: the truth of emptiness nature
(10:45 PM) Thusness: get it?
(10:46 PM) AEN: icic
(10:46 PM) Thusness: means they overcome psychological death
(10:47 PM) Thusness: but have not penetrate life-death matter, they are unable to break certain perceptual-bond even after the experience of non-duality
(10:47 PM) Thusness: therefore i said, there is a stage 6.
(10:47 PM) Thusness: i said there is not only no who, but no where
(10:48 PM) Thusness: and talk about conditionality
(10:48 PM) AEN: icic
(10:48 PM) Thusness: why do i said about stage 6.
(10:48 PM) Thusness: and the self-liberation of awareness is at stage 6.
(10:48 PM) Thusness: that naked awareness must reach the non-local level.

(10:48 PM) Thusness: get it?
(10:50 PM) AEN: back
(10:50 PM) AEN: icic..
(10:50 PM) AEN: hmm self liberation is when one realises impermanence rite? i tot stage 5
(10:51 PM) Thusness: the nakedness must be experienced at stage 6
(10:51 PM) Thusness: then self-liberation occurs
(10:51 PM) AEN: icic..
(10:51 PM) AEN: nakedness means wat
(10:52 PM) Thusness: means clarity
(10:52 PM) AEN: lower stages also got clarity mah
(10:52 PM) Thusness: without symbols
(10:52 PM) AEN: oic stage 5 no symbols liao rite
(10:52 PM) AEN: or even stage 4
(10:52 PM) Thusness: that is why i said that sort of clarity must reach stage 6 then self-liberation will occur
(10:52 PM) Thusness: didn’t listen to me
(10:53 PM) Thusness: that is why i have been telling you don't talk about self liberation too much
(10:53 PM) Thusness: even some very high attainers mistaken they have understood it.” – John Tan, 2007

“Freedom from All Elaborations and Freedom from Self-Nature
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/08/freedom-from-all-elaborations-and.html

John Tan:

That time I wrote 2 article on two-fold emptiness, you have the 2 articles I wrote? I think you post on dharma overground.

Soh:
http://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2013/04/daniel-post-on-anattaemptiness.html

Daniel M. Ingram wrote in http://dharmaoverground.org/web/guest/discussion/-/message_boards/message/4179363

It is interesting that in another thread the was the assertion that MCTB whatever was about the first meaning of emptiness, rather than what your quote defines as both.

Just to be clear:

When I mean empty, I also mean without boundary, without inside and outside

I also mean the direct immediate experience in its unprocessed or raw form. I also mean the total dissolution of the sense of a perceiver.

I also mean no active agent.

I also mean that nothing is stable, including space and time.

I also mean that all is bare, shifting, empty sensate experience, causal, happening according to the basic laws of the universe, naturally, on its own.

I also would say that there is no boundary or differentiation between the sense doors at they occur, nor between body and mind, nor between manifestation and awareness, nor between this and that, beyond those ordinarily used for communication and discriminating function, but these are not the essential nature of experience, just part of it as sensations when they occur.

Nor can one find any here that is stable, nor a now that is stable, nor a knower, nor an investigator, nor any practitioner, nor any attainer.

When I talk of an integrated transient, natural, causal, luminous experience field, this sounds to me exactly like your "All collapse into a single sphere of natural presence and spontaneous simplicity."

I see no obvious difference either in theory or in actual practice.

Thoughts?

Thusness's comments to AEN:

Hi AEN,

Those were just some very casual sharing written on the spur of a moment, they were not well thought. Emptiness to me has another dimension if you wish to look into it.

When there is not even a single trace of Self/self nor is there any sense of inner/outer division, experiencer and what experienced collapsed...

At this moment there is just this vivid beautiful scenery, this bright brilliant world...all self arises

At this point...

Close your eyes....

Voidness....

Relax and rest in this all-consuming awaring void, this clear non-dual Awareness standing alone as itself and of itself...

Then shift the focus to the breath...

Just the sensations of the breath...

Then the transparent dancing sensations...absolutely no mind, no body, no experiencer/experienced, no inner/outer division... borderless and boundless

Every moment is great and miraculous...

This must become natural to you first.

Then at this moment of appreciating maha suchness of the breath, the sensations, the entire scenery, the entire world...

Understand that they are Empty!

Experience the magnificence then deeply understand that they are empty but this Emptiness has nothing to do with deconstruction nor reification nor do I mean they are simply impermanent. So what is this Emptiness I am referring to?

.....

On another occasion Thusness wrote:

Intelligent Knowingness as permanent... continuous... so many projections into time... so involved in mind conceptualities... Deconstruct seer, what happens is just this spontaneously manifested scenery

Deconstruct body further, you have mind-body drop

Deconstruct time, there will only be this clear vivid presence of immediacy

After arising insight of anatta, there is only “directness” and simplicity... go beyond conventions and conceptuality and recognize this immediate radiance is exactly what is appearing in this instantaneous moment...

If you are in need of a view for practice, then embrace the general principle of Dependent Origination that doesn’t entertain who-when-where construct, it will help sever dualistic and inherent propensities. Otherwise you will have to go back to the koan I asked you when I first met you in IRC... this moment ceases as it arises, is this moment arising or ceasing? If you are clear, then further penetrate this total exertion of immediacy and realize that though there is vivid appearances, there is nothing here... nothing now... you will never find it!

....

Also:

In ignorance, there is hearer hearing sound.
In anatta, in hearing, only sound.
Yet sound has no true inherent nature (empty),
It is an activity and is that very activity called “hearing”.
Both “hearing and sound” are pointing to the same activity.
Only when seen to have true existence on either side does confusion arise.

In Madhyamaka Emptiness, reification is seen through.
Yet the experiential state of freedom from reification is not expounded.
However one can have a taste of that freedom from arising insight of anatta since anatta is precisely the freedom from reification of Self/self (First fold Emptiness).
In anatta, seeing is simply the full scenery, in hearing only sound...
thus, always only lights, shape, colors, sounds, scents... in clean purity.
Emptying the object further (second fold) is merely dissolving subtle bond of “externality” that creates the appearance of true existence of objects outside. When “externality” is deconstructed, it is effectively a double confirmation of anatta...
...innerly coreless and outwardly empty, all appearances are still simply sound, lights, colors and rays
In thorough deconstruction, as there is no layer that reifies, there is no conceptuality. Therefore no complication, no confusion, no stains, no boundaries, no center, no sense of dual..
no sense of activity...just self arising.
All collapse into a single sphere of natural presence and spontaneous simplicity.
Whatever appears is
neither here nor now,
Neither in nor out,
Neither arises nor ceases,
In the same space...
non-local, timeless and dimensionless
Simply present...

To Jax:
The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space, water...
is the place where the earth, fire, wind, space and water kills “You” and fully shines as its own radiance, a complete taste of itself and fully itself.

Lastly, it is interesting to get know something about Dzogchen however the jargons and tenets are far beyond me.
Just wrote due to a sudden spurt of interest, nothing intense.
Thanks for all the sharing and exchanges.
Gone!
These?
[2:37 PM, 8/5/2022] John Tan: Yes, I think should add together as they represent the 2 different view of emptiness.
[2:38 PM, 8/5/2022] John Tan: Freedom from all elaborations and freedom from self-nature.
[2:46 PM, 8/5/2022] John Tan: Ok I edited
Soh: Yeah i was thinking that way about those two recently also 😂
Those two articles
[3:15 PM, 8/5/2022] John Tan: Yeah I included the two. One is freedom from all elaboration, one is spacious dream-like nature, lack of self-nature as emptiness.
[3:16 PM, 8/5/2022] John Tan: If not difficult to search

Yin Ling
Which part is which? 😂 I still cannot diffferentiate
Reply
1d
Soh Wei Yu
Yin Ling the part with deconstruction into nonconceptual leads to freedom from elaboration
The other part where it says empty but not deconstruction refers to the empty nature of presence free from self nature
John Tan can confirm
Reply
1d
John Tan
Soh Wei Yu yes. Actually imo, Mipham's presentation of freedom from all elaborations is "coalescence", it is just and exactly the actualisation of the non-conceptual insight of freedom from self-nature and it must be understood that way, not just "non-conceptualities". Focusing on eliminating conceptualities can be/is extremely misleading. However the analytical path will delayed the direct taste of vivid appearances but in terms of de-construction, contemplating freedom from self-nature is far deeper and much more helpful imo in freeing and uprooting mind's blindspots.”

John Tan (Thusness): Hi David,

Not only that it does not last and is insubstantial but it is non-arisen.

Anatta sees through the self (background) and with that freedom from the layer that obscures, everything becomes magnificently clear and real.

However when we attempt to further deconstruct the foreground appearance, for example, looking clearly at a red flower, where is this "redness" of the flower?

Outside? Inside? My consciousness or Soh's consciousness or dog's consciousness?

So clear, vivid and undeniable yet was never truly there. How does what that was "never truly there" disappear?

Likewise for sound. Hit a bell - Tingsss..non-dually clear and undeniable. Where is this crystal clear sound? Outside? Inside? Soh's consciousness, Albert's consciousness, dog's consciousness? No one sentient being hears the same "tingsss"...

Look at everything around...so vivid and lurid...touch anything...so solid and undeniable...when seen with DO, every intrinsic characteristic can never be found despite being fully present!

Same applies to sensations, colors, shapes, scent, sound, thoughts...all experiences are like that...empty and non-arising.

So when background self is negated, foreground appearances become magnificently real, it does not become illusion-like.

What is the actual taste of negating "A" from the "(inherent) existence" of A?

Only when foreground appearances are negated of it's existence, then experience becomes illusion-like...it cannot be otherwise. For everything clearly appears but when seen with the eyes of dependent arising, it is never truly there...it is just illusion-like (not that it wants to be named that way)

Seeing dependent arising is amazing!
Whatever appears is non-arisen; indestructible by being not real and phenomena links without being "connected".
Everything simply turns magic!

Good night!
4 hrs · Edited · Unlike · 4”

After Dieter Vollmuth had clear realisation of anatta (see: Dieter Vollmuth on Anatta, Part 2), John Tan gave the following advice:

“[7:20 PM, 3/15/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Seems like he [Dieter] is clear about anatta now
[7:21 PM, 3/15/2020] John Tan: Yes seems so. When you have that insight, it has to be an experiential insight...such insight cannot be theoretical as experiences turned foreground... in this breakthrough. Awareness disappears as a mental construct into the vividness of sounds, colors, smells, thoughts...etc. Still one needs to look deeply into MMK (Soh: The Mūlamadhyamakakārikā (**Sanskrit**) or **Fundamental Verses** on the Middle Way, is a foundational text of the **Madhyamaka** school of **Mahayana philosophy**, composed by **Nagarjuna** in approximately the second-third century CE.) to see how to deconstruct mental constructs and conventions of cause, effect, arising, existence, non-existence... etc, in order to understand these ongoing vivid appearances free from the conventional extremes... not just non-conceptuality.”

“Phase 4 and 5 are the grayscale of seeing through the subject that it does not exist in actuality (anatta), there are only the aggregates. However even the aggregates are empty (Heart Sutra). It may sound obvious but more often than not, even a practitioner who has matured the anatta experience (as in phase 5) will miss the essence of it.” - John Tan, 2009, Stage 6 in Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment

“Geovani Geo, recently I know that you been enjoying the ride of openness and taste of lurid transparency of your radiance clarity 🤣.

However there are also invaluable lessons in understanding all mere appearances (sensations, colors, smell, taste and sound, thoughts), despite being vividly present are nothing real. This "unreality" not only helps to relinquish one's attachment, it can also trigger insights of the indestructible and unborn nature of what appears.” – John Tan, 2020

John Tan
André A. Pais, a koan for you... Hehe..
This moment ceases as it arises, does it arise or does it cease?

6
Kyoshu Okan Özaydin

John Tan
oh that's a good one 😀

1
□ André A. Pais
What moment..?? 😉

2 · 16h□ John Tan
The mind loves to squeeze all the wondrous vivid colours, sounds and tastes into a conceptualised "single moment" and makes it "arise" and "cease". The spring does not become summer and summer does not come and go.

2

▫ John Tan

That said André, imo real wisdom is an embodied wisdom. Without entanglement, the freedom will not be fully tasted and understood. Freedom and entanglement are not two, nor are they one.
So taste the freedom (from extremes) by being fully engaged in this complex conventional world. Hence see the "moment", see the "arising", see the "ceasing" but also see their dependent arising (designation) and their emptiness.

9

“André, to me anatta is a very specific and definite phase of seeing through the background self/Self quite thoroughly at least in the waking state but there is a tendency that experience can somehow turn very "physical, sense-based and causal" for me.

Every experience is direct, gapless, non-dual, non-conceptual and radiance even total exertion is present, just not empty. Almost equivalent to Actual Freedom as narrated by Richard. In fact I find Richard's description very much my version of arahat 🤣.

For Kyle, due to his view in emptiness, the experiential insight of anatta not only pierce through the self/Self but also triggered the arising insight of emptiness. However this may not be true (imo) in most cases if one's view isn't firmly established. For me when I first encountered the chariot analogy, there is an immediate and intuitive recognition that it is referring to anatta but I am unable to grasp the essence of the phrase "emptiness and non-arisen" there and then.

In other words, in addition to self immolation, a specific insight must arise, it is the prajna that clearly sees through the referent is empty and non-arisen. So anatta I would say is about severing the self/Self whereas phase 6 is the blossoming of this specific insight. Extending this insight from self to phenomena, from conventions to magical appearances is then a natural progression.

As for first bhumi *(Soh: related: [insight] [buddhism] A reconsideration of the meaning of "Stream-Entry" considering the data points of both pragmatic Dharma and traditional Buddhism , Definition of First Bhumi)* I am seriously not sure and never thought of it.

I can only say if we practice long enough, there is a frequent occurrence of a clear, clean and pure spring of joy that emerges from nowhere, floating like cloud. A very helpful antidote for negative emotions.

Even the experience of drinking water is like experiencing a clean and pure stream of luminous sensations in zero dimension similar to a mirage flowing spring water floating in the air.” - John Tan in the Awakening to Reality Discussion Group, 2019, John wrote this maybe a month or two before a breakthrough that Soh had which led to the writing “The Magical Fairytale-like Wonderland and Paradise of this Verdant Earth Free from Affective Emotions,

Reactions and Sufferings"

"It is very difficult to understand clarity from emptiness and DO perspective. Most understand it from substantialist point of view and ended up subsuming." – John Tan, 2020

"6/1/2012 8:17 AM: John: You know what is the difference between phase 5 and 6 insights?

6/1/2012 8:23 AM: John: Does stage 5 understand what that is being said in the YouTube of the water and h2o? (h2o: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q80MfH7xPPE)
6/1/2012 8:27 AM: John: About the essence of emptiness and DO [dependent originatio]. Phase 5 do not have this insight. That is what you fail to clearly understand and tell me. Be clear and understand the difference before going further."

"5/21/2012 11:47 AM: John: Imo View is very important. I wrote a poem about uncontrivance last time. Without view it is not easy to penetrate the depth of uncontrivance through experience alone
5/21/2012 11:48 AM: John: The insight of anatta tells you how to get into direct and immediate recognition of effortless non-dual is an example
5/21/2012 11:53 AM: John: You have to undergo the phases of insights to know the importance
5/21/2012 11:54 AM: John: Through direct realization and experience alone is difficult even to have the insight of anatta, much less 2 fold emptiness
5/21/2012 11:57 AM: John: There are the very diligent students who practice faithfully according to anatta but is unable to penetrate the essence of emptiness. Means they realized and directly experienced anatta, in seeing just the seen and no-self anatta is clear. Just aggregates and no-self/Self
5/21/2012 12:01 PM: John: But they are unable to realize the truth that self is a label propelled by the tendencies of wrong view so they are unable to see the same "emptiness" view of self is also applied to whatever arises. These group of practitioners penetrate anatta and skewed towards experience but fail to strike a balance before the breadth and depth of the view is realized. Therefore what I want is to let you discover the difference so that you have better understanding of the view, experience and realization. You have to go through the phases and not rely on me too much but pointing is important. Means you can have direct experience of in seeing just the seen and clearly see the Essence of the 2 stanza yet not understand that self is a mere convention and convenient label. You will simply hold on to that experience and realization like the Theravada and get stuck there."

"5/21/2012 3:13 PM: John: Realizing that self is simply a convenient label and applies to all phenomena is different from clearly seeing there is no one behind aggregates. This also means that you didn't really undergo a period of desync between view and experience and therefore cannot clearly understand the importance and implications. Means you are fortunate enough to have direct experience with the help of the view. But you have not gone through the process of dropping all views and concepts in an early stage of practice to know its harm."

"The nonexistence of the personal self was taught for the sake of the Shravakas and Pratyeka-buddhas. By contrast, the

nonexistence of *both* the phenomenal and the personal self was set forth to enable Bodhisattvas to attain the wisdom of omniscience. It is true that the Shravakas and the Pratyekabuddhas understand dependent arising, the mere conditionedness of phenomena, but they do not meditate on the complete nonexistence of the phenomenal self. They concentrate instead on the complete nonexistence of the personal self as a means to eliminate the emotional afflictions experienced in the three worlds of samsara.” - Chandrakirti, quoted from the book Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti’s Madhyamakavatara with Commentary by Jamgon Mipham

“Examination of the Five Aggregates

https://sites.google.com/site/dharmadepository/translations/examination-of-the-five-aggregates

This is a line by line translation of the Huayan Patriarch Cheng'guan's work.

五蘊觀

Examination of the Five Aggregates

沙門澄觀述

Written by Śramaṇa Chéngguān

問。凡夫之人欲求解脫。當云何修。

It is asked, “The common person seeks liberation. How should he practise?”

答曰。當修二觀。

We respond saying that one should practise the two examinations.

二觀者何。一人空觀。二法空觀。

What are the two examinations? The first is the examination of the emptiness of persons. The second is the examination of the emptiness of phenomena (dharma).

夫生死之本莫過人法二執。

The root of birth and death – nothing goes beyond the two attachments of persons and phenomena.

迷身心總相。故執人我為實有。

One misunderstands the body and mind's characteristic of totality and thus grasps the self of the person as an actual existent.

迷五蘊自相。故計法我為實有。

One misunderstands the five aggregates' individual characteristics and thus conceives the self of a phenomenon as an actual existent.

計人我者。用初觀照之。

For the conception of the self of person we utilize the first examination and investigate it.

知五蘊和合假名為人。

We then know the five aggregates come together and are provisionally called a person.

一一諦觀。但見五蘊。求人我相終不可得。

Each are carefully examined. We only see the five aggregates. We seek out the self-characteristic of the person and in the end it cannot be found.

云何名為五蘊。色受想行識是。

What are called the five aggregates? They are form (*rūpa*), sensation (*vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*), volitional formations (*saṃskāra*) and consciousness (*vijñāna*).

云何觀之。

How does one examine them?

身則色蘊。所謂地水火風是。其相如何。

The body is the aggregate of form. This is said to be earth, water, fire and wind. What are their characteristics?

堅則地。潤則水。煖則火。動則風。

Solidity is earth. Moistness is water. Warmth is fire. Movement is wind.

觀心則四蘊。所謂受想行識是。其相如何。

In examining the mind there are four aggregates. These are said to be sensation, perception, volitional formations and consciousness. What are their characteristics?

領納為受。取相為相。造作為行。了別為識。

Feeling is sensation. Apprehending characteristics is perception. Creating actions is volitional formations. Cognition is consciousness.

若能依此身心相。諦觀分明。於一切處但見五蘊。求人我相終不可得。

If we rely on these characteristics of body and mind, carefully examine and see clearly, then in all places we only see the five aggregates. We search out the self-characteristic of the person and in the end it cannot be found.

名人空觀。乘此觀。行出分段生死。永處涅槃。名二乘解脫。

We call this the examination of the emptiness of persons. If one utilizes this examination then one departs birth and death within the six realms and forever abides in nirvāṇa. We call this the liberation of the two vehicles.

計法我者用後觀照之。知一一蘊皆從緣生。都無自性。求蘊相不可得。則五蘊皆空。

For the conception of the self of a phenomenon we utilize the later examination and investigate it. We then know that each of the aggregates all arise from conditions and all are without self-essence. We seek out the characteristics of the aggregates and they cannot be found and so the five aggregates are all empty.

名法空觀。若二觀雙照。了人我法我。畢竟空無所有。

We call this the examination of the emptiness of phenomena. If we investigate with both examinations we understand the person's self and the phenomenon's self are ultimately empty without existence.

離諸怖畏。度一切苦厄。出變易生死。名究竟解脫。

Free from all fears, crossing over all pains and emerging into existence as a Bodhisattva – we call this ultimate liberation.

問。夫求解脫。祇是了妄證真。但能契真如理。寂然無念則便離縛。何假興心觀蘊方求解脫。豈不乖理哉。

It is asked, “Seeking liberation is only just understanding delusion and realizing the truth. It is merely being able to realize the principle of *tathātā* – in quietude without thoughts and then binds are removed. How does one provisionally arouse the mind, examine the aggregates and then seek liberation? Is this not in opposition to the principle?”

答。離蘊真妄約何而立。且五蘊者身心之異名。行人若不識身心真妄。何能懸契。

We answer: with what do you stand without aggregates, truth and delusion? For the moment the five aggregates are a different name for the body and mind. Supposing the practitioner is not aware of the truth and delusions of body and mind, how could they completely understand them?

不達真妄之本。諸行徒施。

They do not reach the source of truth and delusion and practises are vainly undertaken.

故經云。若於虛空終不能成。斯之謂也。

Thus the scripture states, “It is like in emptiness ultimately nothing being able to be established.”

且計人我者。凡夫之執也。計法我者。二乘之滯也。

The conception of the self of the person is a delusional attachment of the ordinary person. The conception of the self of a phenomenon is a hindrance of the two vehicles.

故令修二觀。方能了妄證真。豈可離也。

Thus we have them practice the two examinations and then they are able to understand delusion and realize the truth. How could you do without this?

Labels: Anatta, Dependent Origination, Emptiness, Huayan 0 comments | | “

“In Buddhism, though it is understood as all manifestations are but mind, the focus is not [on] mind, it is [on] the nature of this mind. If your focus is on mind, then mind becomes an entity. If you see the [empty] 'nature', then you see dharma. The figure of speech or way of expression though may appear similar in Buddhism and Advaita Vedanta, the understanding must be from Dharma of DO [Dependent Origination]. Your focus is not Mind but the nature of Mind. That is why emptiness is taught.” - John Tan, 2009

“Non-arising to me must be understood from clarity perspective. All appearances are mind, an occurrence (clarity) does not amount to anything, like a movement in thoughts.” - John Tan, 2019

“[2:04 PM, 1/27/2020] John Tan: You must differentiate between mind level and direct taste...the issue is it sounded the same but are vastly different...lol. When you say there is no it to have a distinct nature, it means more at the mind level. So you don't say there is no it therefore no it go have a distinct nature. is also important to understand this same nature hat it must be realized together with no coming and go going.

[2:57 PM, 1/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. its to see that the very appearance/display is empty clarity

[2:58 PM, 1/27/2020] John Tan: Means because there is no subsuming into clarity yet they are of same nature, so whatever touch, felt, seen, tasted are non-arisen like chariot. Means all of what you have learnt about chariot applies. Now if you deconstruct background and then deconstructed foreground, you have the same taste but that deep

understanding of the nature of mind/phenomena may not arise... later has an additional mind releasing "effect". Now you know and understand non-arisen in the case of substantial and essence view is different from essenceless-ness view. But to integrate this into actual taste, unless there is a trigger, otherwise the mind can't "link" the two into actual taste. It will remain at the conceptual level. So what is the trigger point?
[10:33 PM, 1/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Link the two as in clarity and non arising?
[11:10 PM, 1/27/2020] John Tan: No. Because they have the same nature

[11:16 PM, 1/27/2020] John Tan: The mind constructs are empty...but like I ask you, if it is just to say that, there is no point teaching about emptiness... That is why I don't want to talk about it.

[12:36 AM, 1/28/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. I think the trigger point is realising the emptiness and non arising of presence, not merely label or construct
[7:41 AM, 1/28/2020] John Tan: Now how can "anything" non-arise?
[11:15 AM, 1/29/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Means appear but nothing there or originated.. only a radiant appearance like reflection. Doesnt amount to anything
[9:45 AM, 1/31/2020] John Tan: This there nothing there, originated, only a radiant appearance? You must understanding that without realizing that phenomena and mind/clarity are of the same nature, it can't be understood this way. So one must realize the fundamental issue because phenomena seem so solid, real and objective. The Awareness teaching on the other hand errs towards the other extreme of subsuming which has the same root of ignorance as assuming a true and objective world out there.”

“Mahamati: How did the Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas abandon the view of an absolute arising, dwelling, or dissolving?
[Buddha]: They abandoned it in this manner. They cognized that all phenomena are like an ephemeral illusion and dream, that they are detached from the duality of self and others, and that they are therefore unborn [emptiness.] They focused on the mind's manifestations and cognized external reality as unreal. By perceiving the unreality of phenomena, they brought about the cessation of the outflowing sensory consciousness. Because they cognized the unreality of their psychosomatic aggregates and the interacting conditions of the three planes of cosmic existence as originating from their deluded mind, they saw external and internal phenomena as devoid of any inherent nature and as transcending all concepts. Having abandoned the view of an absolute arising [of phenomena,] they realized the illusory nature and thereby attained insight into the unborn Dharma [expanse of emptiness.]” - Lankavatara Sutra

“The empty [truth of emptiness] is the emptiness of the conventions. The taste is like empty convention, that is knowing it is empty but yet fully manifest and functional. No difference whether conceptually or non-conceptually in terms of taste.” - John Tan, 2019

“Now to tell you that conventional entities are empty and non-arisen, what is the purpose? It is pointing to the nature of what appears... to allow the mind to conceptually understand what is it like... to get the mind [to] familiarise so that when you directly taste what appears, insight to the nature of what appears can be directly recognized. If the objects

and subject were to truly exists, experience will not be like that. The colors, sound, thoughts, smell, sensations, taste will not be like that. It cannot be a case where after purging of conceptual imputations, suddenly what’s experienced directly becomes real and true.” - John Tan, 2019

“No Coming and Going, Only Coming and Going
[11:37 AM, 11/19/2019] Soh Wei Yu: 🌺 ~Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche🌺

ཨེ་མ་ཧོ།
E Ma Ho!

When we say 'Emaho' ('Wonder')(in german : 'Wunderbar') it is the wonder or surprise that comes from realizing the unborn nature. Phenomena have never been born in the past, they do not dwell in the present, and they will never cease in the future. They neither come nor go. This is the real meaning of the absolute truth, the primordial nature.

Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche – (Zurchungpa's Testament Commentaries – on Wisdom –Collected Works, Vol III – pg 291, Shambhala)
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[11:38 AM, 11/19/2019] Soh Wei Yu: "What we call ‘Buddha Mind’ is synonymous with the three temporal worlds of past, present, and future. This Mind and the three temporal worlds are not separated from each other by so much as one single hair’s breadth. Even so, when we are discussing the two as things that are distinct and separate from each other, then they are farther apart than eighteen thousand breadths of hair. Thus, if I were asked what the phrase “This is the mind of the past” means, I would have to say in response, “This cannot be grasped.” If I were asked what the phrase “This is the mind of the present” means, I would have to say in response, “This cannot be grasped.” If I were asked what the phrase “This is the mind of the future” means, I would say in response, “This cannot be grasped.”

As to the mind of which I am speaking, if I say that there is Mind, which at the present moment is described as ‘Mind that cannot be grasped,’ then I say, “At the present moment, It cannot be grasped.” I do not say, “The mind cannot be grasped,” I say in all earnestness, “It cannot be grasped.” I do not say, “The mind can be grasped,” I say in all earnestness, “It cannot be grasped.” Further, should you ask me, “What is the mind of the past which cannot be grasped?” I would say, “It is synonymous with being born and dying, going and coming.” Should you ask, “What is the mind of the present which cannot be grasped?” I would say, “It is synonymous with being born and dying, going and coming.” Should you ask, “What is the mind of the future which cannot be grasped?” I would say, “It is synonymous with being born and dying, going and coming.”

In sum, there is Buddha Mind, which is the fences and walls, tiles* and stones, and all the Buddhas in the three temporal worlds directly experience It as something that cannot be held onto. There are only the fences and walls, tiles and stones, which are Buddha Mind, and all Buddhas directly experience It in the three temporal worlds as ungraspable. What is more, That which is ungraspable within the great earth with its mountains and rivers exists there by Its very nature. That which is ungraspable in grasses and trees, wind and water, accordingly, is Mind. Also, It is what

is ungraspable in “Letting our mind abide nowhere and giving rise to the Mind.” 3 And also, the Mind Beyond Grasping, which gives voice to the eighty thousand Gates by means of all the Buddhas throughout all generations everywhere, is the same as this."

- Dogen (Shin Fukatoku)
[11:38 AM, 11/19/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Seems contradictory but I think both are important
[11:40 AM, 11/19/2019] John Tan: ? Which one you are talking about?
[11:40 AM, 11/19/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Dilgo khyentse and dogen quote. One talks about no three times, no coming and going. The other talks about buddha mind as three times, coming and going
[11:41 AM, 11/19/2019] John Tan: It's the same. But for one to understand Buddha mind as the 3 times is to understand anatta. There is no mind beyond 3 times. There is no beyond.
[11:44 AM, 11/19/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. One is talking about non arising the other is anatta right
[11:48 AM, 11/19/2019] John Tan: Dunno never read the below 2 articles. Dogen is clear... non-arisen frees one from the extremes of existence and non-existence...
[11:51 AM, 11/19/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. I think if people dont realise what dogen said, mind will be substantiated. But if they dont realise what dilgo said then phenomena may be substantiated
[11:52 AM, 11/19/2019] John Tan: Yes. Like I said, there is nothing wrong using Awareness. However one should see that it is only a conventional expression. But the teaching of DO [dependent origination], emptiness and non-arisen about the chariot analogy is pointing more to the actual taste of what appears in a conceptual way. To get us familiarised and understand in the right way.”

“We cannot be separated from time. This means that because, in reality, there is no coming or going in time, when we cross the river or climb the mountain we exist in the eternal present of time; this time includes all past and present time. . . . Most people think time is passing and do not realize that there is an aspect that is not passing”

- Dogen, Soto Zen Master

“That which, taken as causal or dependent, is the process of being born and passing on, is, taken non-causally and beyond all dependence, declared to be nirvāṇa.

— Nāgārjuna , Mūlamadhyamikakārikā

“Session Start: Tuesday, 10 July, 2007

(11:35 AM) Thusness: X last time used to say something like we should 'yi jue' (rely on awareness) and not 'yi xin' (rely on thoughts) bcos jue is everlasting, thoughts are impermanent... something like that. this is not right. this is advaita teaching.
(11:35 AM) AEN: oic

(11:36 AM) Thusness: now what is most difficult to understand in buddhism is this. to experience the unchanging is not difficult. but to experience impermanence yet know the unborn nature is prajna wisdom. It would be a misconception to think that Buddha do not know the state of unchanging. or when Buddha talked about unchanging it is referring to an unchanging background. otherwise why would i have stressed so much about the misunderstanding and misinterpretation. And of course, it is a misunderstanding that I have not experienced the unchanging. :) what you must know is to develop the insight into impermanence and yet realised the unborn. this then is prajna wisdom. to 'see' permanence and say it is unborn is momentum. when buddha say permanence it is not referring to that. to go beyond the momentum you must be able to be naked for a prolong period of time. then experience impermanence itself, not labelling anything. the seals are even more important than the buddha in person. even buddha when misunderstood it becomes sentient. :) longchen [Sim Pern Chong] wrote an interesting passage on closinggap. reincarnation.
(11:47 AM) AEN: oh ya i read it
(11:48 AM) Thusness: the one he clarify kyo's reply?
(11:50 AM) AEN: ya
(11:50 AM) Thusness: that reply is a very important reply, and it also proves that longchen has realised the importance of transients and the five aggregates as buddha nature. time for unborn nature. You see, it takes one to go through such phases, from "I AM" to Non-dual to isness then to the very very basic of what buddha taught... Can you see that?
(11:52 AM) AEN: yea
(11:52 AM) Thusness: the more one experience, the more truth one sees in what buddha taught in the most basic teaching. Whatever longchen experience is not because he read what buddha taught, but because he really experience it.
(11:54 AM) AEN: icic..”

“2013: John Tan Haha Mr J, you never give up.

This heart is the "space" of where, the "time" of when and the "I" of who.

In hearing, it's that "sound".

In seeing, it's that "scenery".

In thinking, it is that "eureka"!

In snapping a finger, it is seizing the whole entire moment of that instantaneous "snapping".

Just marvelous such as it is on the fly.

So no "it" but thoroughly empty.

To you this "heart" is most real, to dzogchen it is illusory. Though illusory, it is fully vivid and brilliance. Since it is illusory, it never really truly arise. There is genuine "treasure" in the illusory.

I think Kyle has a lot points to share. Do unblock him.

Nice chat And happy journey Mr. J!

Gone!
December 12 at 8:24am via mobile · Unlike · 10”

“[15/11/20, 2:03:00 PM] John Tan: Tasting the "realness" of what appears and what appears is nothing real are two different insights. I wrote these b4.
[15/11/20, 2:04:07 PM] Soh Wei Yu: experiential taste of empty and arisen?
[15/11/20, 2:04:50 PM] John Tan: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../daniel-post-on...
[15/11/20, 2:05:54 PM] John Tan: Non-arisen
[15/11/20, 2:06:15 PM] Soh Wei Yu: ic..
[15/11/20, 2:13:32 PM] John Tan: It is not only realising mere appearances are just one's radiance clarity but empty clarity is like that...like a 🌈. Beautiful and clearly appears, but nothing "there" at all. These 2 aspects are very important.
1. Very "vivid", pellucid
2. Nothing real
Tasting either one will not trigger the "aha" realization.
[15/11/20, 2:18:30 PM] John Tan: But no need to over emphasize to others.
[15/11/20, 2:19:08 PM] John Tan: As it is too difficult to express the taste...lol”

“Entities do not exist In their causes,
in their conditions,
in aggregations of many things,
or in individual things.
Therefore, all entities are empty.”
—— Nāgārjuna

Sevenfold reasoning of the Chariot

“There is no chariot which is other than its parts
There is no chariot which is the same as its parts
There is no chariot which possesses its parts
There is no chariot which depends on its parts
There is no chariot upon which the parts depend

There is no chariot which is the collection of its parts
There is no chariot which is the shape of its parts”

- Chandrakirti, on 'mere designation'

“Emptiness/Chariot as Vivid Appearing Presence

There seems to be different understandings, or phases of understandings, of emptiness. We can understand emptiness in a manner like 'weather', where weather is merely an imputation upon a collection of phenomena like rain falling, sun shining, and so on. But we can understand this in terms of the emptiness of the imputed label, leaving the collection, the aggregates, the very manifest vivid experience "un-emptied". Actually if we truly realized in direct realization how 'chariot' applies as vivid appearing presence, then that covers all. As John Tan told me before, "Don't keep thinking of aggregates as also empty, if you understand chariot is empty, what is not empty?" However the problem is that the aggregates do appear real unless we've had direct realization that the 'name-only' or 'empty' is actually vivid appearing presence.

The label or chariot that is empty is the vivid appearing presence, unfindable shimmering vivid like mirage.. not mental label. That vivid appearing presence is what is empty just like chariot is empty of itself. This means that one must be able to directly link "empty" with vivid appearances. Instead of empty as empty of essence, empty = vivid appearances.

If we think of a label "chariot" and then think "that labelled chariot is empty of essence", that is not directly experiencing chariot as vivid presence. If we think 'chariot/weather/etc' is empty because of this and that, it is still inferential analysis rather than direct realisation and actualization. However, when one realizes that chariot = vivid appearing presence, it is a direct experiential insight. Empty = this vivid presence. All along it is trying to convey this taste and insight. But conceptually it is understood that way, empty of essence.

Like any object you see, a handphone, a table, a car, that vivid presencing is 'chariot' - is vivid unfindable appearing presence, hence there is no handphone.. pain is vivid appearing presence, hence there is no pain. The vividly presencing handphone is the chariot that appears and functions but is empty, the vividly presencing pain is the chariot. Being so, there is no chariot, no pain, no suffering, and all that negations in Heart Sutra. Heart Sutra even says, "No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind".

But when we talk about the "no"s, there can have many meanings. What does the "no" as a negation mean? Certainly it is not referring to non-existence, which is an extreme. And we certainly do (conventionally) experience forms, sounds... and so on. Obviously anyone reading this is fully cognizant and conscious rather than an inert corpse or a piece of wood. I have seen new Heart Sutra translations that translate 'emptiness' into something like 'empty of independent existence', stressing on how all phenomena are empty of a separate, independent being, else they might be stressing on ‘interdependence’. Although this seems to be a more explanatory and better understanding than ‘nihilistic non-existence’, I would say even that interpretative translation misses the mark, and hence John and I do prefer the more accurate and precise translations over the interpretive ones or those that take poetic liberties. Furthermore we may think that it is the mentally labelled entities that are empty of self-essence but then we fail to go beyond seeing emptiness on the level of constructs.

At the level of direct experiential insight, it is the very unfindability, ungraspability, referencelessness of empty-luminosity.. an appearing “absence”. There is no weather not as in weather doesn't exist but is simply vivid empty appearing/presencing.. but it's not just the mentally labelled entity "weather" that is empty nor is it that weather doesn't exist but the very vivid empty appearing/presencing we call rain falling etc is nothing there, an appearing absence or vivid empty presencing like a rainbow or mirage or hologram. Emptiness is none other than form as it is precisely the appearing absence that is empty, is emptiness. Appearances are mere shimmerings of light-mirages.. it's just taste of empty presencing appearance. So the car I'm looking at, by being like a chariot and mere name is mere shimmering luminous light. It is to see that chariot = vivid appearing presence. Whatever's seen, heard, smelled, sensed, tasted and thought are unfindable despite the clear display, just like chariot. We don't have to differentiate inherency and non-inherency, conceptual or non-conceptual. If you get used to it, whatever appears is just empty.

Form is emptiness, emptiness is form should be understood in this way... taste, see, and smell emptiness.

2009 conversation with John Tan:

“(12:20 PM) Thusness: what you see is DO, emptiness and non-dual, your mind is therefore trapped. This is how our mind is trapped and prevents the seeing. when we are trapped in non-dual, we can't see emptiness. Even when it is clearly mentioned, it can't be seen.
(12:22 PM) AEN: so what does that mean? :P
(12:23 PM) Thusness: reality is like an illusion. but not an illusion. it is like a dream but not a dream. Everything is a magical display. And everything is mind. :) What does that mean? The mind is always wrongly understood. from "I AM" to non-dual experience. We cannot understand the truth of this mind therefore we can't see mind. just like you can't see the essence of the article. we have a preconception.

Everything is mind. And Everything is like a magical display. that is why I said there is no mirror, there is only reflection. the key is to know the nature of mind. to see that everything is reflection, transience Everything is Mind is what that must be derived from anatta and emptiness. but we do not know what "everything" is and what mind is. therefore we cannot 'see' and cannot experience.
we cannot see the essence of it. so anatta and emptiness are taught.

what is Everything? it is like magical display, like an illusion. but it is not an illusion. like a dream but not a dream which many misunderstood. therefore when we experience sounds, thoughts, see colors, forms, dimension and shapes...all is empty like an illusion. like dreams like the 'redness' of a flower. like the 'selfness'. like the 'hereness'. like the 'nowness', yet empty, nothing real.

if you can't totally see that pristineness, that non-dual, that luminosity and see only emptiness, you are mistaken. the 'redness', the 'nowness', the 'hardness', the coldness, all are as luminous, as clear, as vivid. we must fully experience it. yet they are not real, nothing concrete, no solidity, nothing substantial, nothing graspable, no findable.

Empty, thus non-dual luminosity and emptiness. we see this union, in all transience,
passing phenomena, in emotions, in feelings, in thoughts, in sounds, in sight, in color, in dimension, in shapes, in taste, in hardness, coldness, in sweetness, in sky, in the sound of chirping bird, all experience are like that. empty yet luminous, then we realise that it is the same as mind, it is mind. if we din see these 2 nature of mind thoroughly, we can't see. we distant, we seek, we find. because of its emptiness nature, the manifold, we cannot know what mind is. therefore the ground is taught, the view is taught. empty yet non-dual luminosity, so that you can see and experience directly that the transience are mind, yet there is no self nature, get it?
(12:38 PM) AEN: think so
(12:38 PM) Thusness: then you experience what is one taste. Because we do not know what mind is, we cannot experience mind. we do not know, that is why insight is important. however if you do not know what is non-dual luminosity and emptiness, how is a practitioner going to experience mind everywhere and know that whatever arises is mind? therefore first anatta (non-dual luminosity), then emptiness, then spontaneous arising. do you understand what I mean? read the article (On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection)”

After reading this passage John Tan commented that Mahamudra clearly is speaking about the same insight as him regarding emptiness/chariot as vivid appearance:

“If you say that the nature of all thoughts is total voidness without arising or cessation, you take voidness too literally and fall into the extreme of nihilism. What they are is vividness that leaves no trace; whose nature is without arising, cessation, or duration; and which cannot be identified as having this colour, that shape, etc.

If you realise this much, you have developed a little understanding. Furthermore, you must recognise that they cannot be identified as this or that, and do so without thinking conceptually, "They cannot be identified as this or that." And

without any grasping or contradiction in your mind between the vividness and the voidness of thoughts, you must recognise that thoughts arise and subside simultaneously, like a drawing on water.

In addition, you must gain the insight that there is not the slightest difference in nature between thought and its object, between the settled mind and the moving mind, between past mind and present mind, and so forth. They are all by nature clear, brilliant awareness.

When you draw a thought in for investigation, or if it disappears, it is not that it has gone into clear voidness, nor that such voidness has been left in its wake. Rather, the thought that arises all of a sudden is itself clear voidness. When you realise or gain this insight, then you have recognised the nature of thought.

There is not even the slightest difference between the non-conceptual state and the state of true insight into the triad of dynamic thought, settled mind, and thought's nature as clear, void, and brilliant. To distinguish between these is an interpolation of the mind that does not recognise them.

—Wangchug Dorje, 9th Karmapa (1556-1603), "Mahāmudrā: Eliminating the Darkness of Ignorance""

“Emptiness is like seeing everything is a sandcastle.. a chariot in real life, its seeming aggregation appears solid only when unexamined but really is just an appearing aggregation dependently originating.. it seems to arise and come into existence but in truth is just an empty exertion or appearance or aggregation.. very vivid but nothing is created. If something were to be created that would mean it is no longer an aggregation, no longer dependent on parts, conditions, functions, relations, etc.. whatever entity we designate is purely conventional and empty. Whatever appears as nondual vivid presencing is also of the nature chariots and sandcastle, appearing through conditions and aggregation but nothing besides an unfindable and vividly shimmering appearance of dependent origination that is equivalent to mirages and reflections.. its like what would a hand be without the five fingers exerting? What would a mirror be without its reflections? The mirror is just the ongoing reflecting, an empty appearance that is empty radiance clarity. Besides these, behind these or within these no mirror could be found. We only ever experience an empty exertion as vivid appearance, but never the origination nor cessation of real entities

The seeing of this has everything to do with seeing the chariot like, unfindable nature of presencing and nothing to with the notion that everything is dreamed up or projected or things like that"

“[6:31 PM, 4/10/2020] John Tan: To me, the only thing that I am interested now is about how one understands the "chariot".”

Awakening to Reality

Rick Indie · 8h ·
Hey all,
So I've been contemplating something but I'm a bit stuck: so on no-self, I've been trying to contemplate on the body & sense-of-self being an illusion, but this is hard to do when my body is itself solid & can bump into (seemingly separate)

people. How can this be an illusion if this solidity maintains itself? Soh Wei Yu is there any writing on how I (the body) can still bump into solid boundaries but still be considered an illusion? Thanks for all the work you all do.

- □

□ Soh Wei Yu
Self and solidity of matter are two different constructs. You can realise no-self through the two stanzas, such that there are no self/Self but only the pure aggregates, but matter still feels solid and concretely real, even if total exertion is experienced, then it is reified into 'actual world' which is physical but vividly and intensely luminous and alive, direct and nondual. That is like John Tan's initial experience of anatta and is equivalent to the state of Actual Freedom by Richard. In this phase there is no more the sense of being a soul inhabiting the body (nor the sense of an ultimate and infinite background subsuming everything like I AM to one mind), but the body is still materially existent, and is not separate from the entire universe, and as such experience is boundless without a center yet not realised as empty or unreal.
Later on, when you contemplate, you start to realise the world is more like chariot. Everything is still intensely vivid but more like a hologram. Even stepping on ground there is not the sense that there are two solid inherently existing parts interacting but like a mere dependently originating, empty, non-arisen and insubstantial luminosity and vividness. Appearance/presence that is vividly luminous has no nature like a mirage and a rainbow. Perhaps 'rainbow body' is the full actualization of this until all traces of inherently existing self, body and phenomenal world is exhausted (also known as exhaustion of all phenomena).

- 13m
- Edited

□ Soh Wei Yu
Something I wrote years back on chariot https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../emptinesschariot-as...

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
Emptiness/Chariot as Vivid Appearing Presence
Emptiness/Chariot as Vivid Appearing Presence

- 6m

□ Soh Wei Yu
Also John Tan wrote some time back
"looks like yin ling been enjoying 洪文亮 teaching 👍. Non-dual without sense of perciever or percieved can still be substantial, so there can still be "one" -- "万法归一， 一归何处?". So need to discern this clearly. In other words,

subsuming object into pure subjectivity will also result in non-dual experiences, however if both object and subject are realized to be empty and non-arisen, then non-dual is freedom from extremes.
When the view of empty and non-arisen is actualized daily life, not only conceptual conventions are realized to be empty and non-arisen, but appearances (colors, sound, smell, taste, sensations, thoughts) are just like that in real-time taste. Therefore whether conceptual or non-conceptual both share a single taste.
And this is the "turning point" post anatta where whatever appears is luminous and free, without center without base; like cloud, like rainbow; spontaneous and perfect. Otherwise experiences can still be clean and pure, pellucid and bright but feels "concretely real" and solid.
....
And as long as there is this sense of "concretely real", experience will not be spontaneous and free. 好好体会。"
□ □ Reply

□ 6m

[9:03 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: When dogen row the boat, can you feel the total exertion? When Buddha walk, can you feel the total exertion? When you hear someone describe immense connectivity and interconnectedness, can you feel total exertion?

[10:11 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: yeah seamlessly connected.. just like dogen rowing the boat makes boat what it is, dogen, boat, rowing the boat are a seamless exertion.. so reading dogen now, and dogen rowing the boat is a seamlessly connected exertion.. lol dunno how to describe

[10:12 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: Seamless exertion into what?

[10:13 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: this very presencing or whatever is appearing

[10:15 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: No good. Into the act of rowing

[10:15 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..

[10:15 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: What appears in presence. But that is not the question. I am asking you about total exertion. Do you need conventions and concepts? If there are no concepts and conventions, can you feel this total exertion? If you are free from concepts and conventions, can there be emptiness? Or all those illusion that you are talking about? You are too worried to be non-conceptuality and can't see anything. So tell me are there conventions or just plain pure experience?

[10:23 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: total exertion depends on seeing that all those conventional phenomena are intimately linked in seamless exertion.. but those conventions are not seen as separate and independent. means you are not denying boat or rowing or dogen.. yet they are all exerting seamlessly in rowing

[10:24 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: Is there a sense of self? In total exertion?

[10:29 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: not as a separate, distinct, independent entity.. but depending on circumstance they can arise as thoughts and concerns or energy of grasping

[10:29 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: In total exertion do you have energy of grasping?

[10:30 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: in fully experiencing total exertion no

[10:32 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: So no sense of self, but feel sense of immense connectivity? Only when you what?

[10:37 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: you see the dependencies and emptiness of those conventional phenomena and self.. means they are all dissolved into the act of rowing

[10:42 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: You are not investing into your experience again. What emptiness

[10:43 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: When in total exertion, you look into the conditions of the origination

[10:44 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: as in those conventional phenomena are empty of being independent, separate existences.. they are intimately connected

[10:44 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: It is the immense web of linkings that give rise to the experience

[10:45 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..

[10:45 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: Like the chariot, it is at the other side of the equation. When you look at this moment of experience in a state of no self, you realize the immensity of the conditions right?

[10:49 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: yeah

[10:50 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: So when you want to practice the chariot I am talking about...don't just focus on the empty aspect...

[11:01 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: Is there a need to relate chariot as dependent on its parts to talk about emptiness? Why do you need to talk about chariot as dependent on its parts at all? not just what appears is empty?
[11:17 PM, 5/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: its conveying that whatever appears although empty of findable essence is the total exertion of all the immense conditions
[11:18 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: It is conveying all you need to know and understand. It is conveying emptiness. Conveying spontaneous presence. Conveying dependent origination is not a cause-effect relationship as we understand. Conveying origination in dependence

[11:22 PM, 5/1/2020] John Tan: To me, post anatta, all these must be experienced and understood.”

“□ Soh Wei Yu

Admin · May 18 at 8:12 PM

Everything as chariot

Everything has no self or its own existence besides the limitless and boundless but empty relations

My walking on the park is dependent on the road and trees and scenery ahead as they are dependent on my walking

Empty and totally exerted and vivid

Seeing this, “this is, that is” and emptiness became clear

Now when looking at the water reflecting the sky its seen like everything is like this, empty and boundless relations

Whereas anatta is seeing there is no behind, only this.. this reveals “this” to be like chariot, the nature of reflections

Seeing this is blissful, revealing everything to be blissful empty radiance and total exertion.

6” - A discussion about ignorance, views, post-anatta, conceptuality, emptiness

Two Levels of Emptiness
[5:58 PM, 10/28/2019] John Tan: Now as I told you, there are two level... one is seeing through conventional constructs as empty and non-arisen. As I always asked you, why not just say the constructs are non-existence? Isn’t non-existence a more appropriate phrase than "emptiness" and why DO [dependent origination]? why do we say whatever arises in dependent is empty and non-arisen? why brings in DO [dependent origination] at all? I told you that the purpose of telling you that is to allow you to understand the nature of mind/phenomena. It is to train the mind so that when it comes face to face, it recognizes that is the nature of presence.
[6:11 PM, 10/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Emptiness is not non existence because emptiness is empty presencing/appearing, which is not the same as non existence but neither is it existent, rather empty presencing is like reflections that appear via dependencies but empty
[6:13 PM, 10/28/2019] John Tan: So what is the purpose of teaching us the idea of conventional constructs are empty and non-arisen? What is the purpose of teaching Dependent Origination? For this recognition right?
[6:16 PM, 10/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah
[6:17 PM, 10/28/2019] John Tan: So that when you come face to face this empty presencing you can directly recognize it... appears but not found.. When you look at this empty display, you realize it cannot be said to be mind nor not mind, neither internal nor external, either here nor not here... Nothing to do with non-conceptuality. But the nature of it. Get what I mean? That is you see through conventionalities and recognize the nature of what appears...”

[11:49 AM, 9/2/2019] Soh Wei Yu: “Oh TKF, this only proves you have conditioned yourself with a book. I think I will still prefer our Sakya/Nyingma overnegation any day to your Gelug undernegation.

When you understand that all phenomena are completely equivalent to illusions, you really do not have to worry at all about existence, let alone inherent existence.” - malcolm
[1:08 PM, 9/2/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Now I think I kind of agree with malcolm

[1:08 PM, 9/2/2019] Soh Wei Yu: One can have no notions of inherent existence but things appear real. What do you think?
[1:08 PM, 9/2/2019] John Tan: Yes. Inherent existence is for beginners
[1:10 PM, 9/2/2019] Soh Wei Yu: In that case the non gelug version of emptiness seems more correct?
[1:11 PM, 9/2/2019] John Tan: Not true. It is just the pedagogy. It is also important to point out the idea of inherent existence.

Soh, 2019:

“Emptiness is the emptiness of conventional phenomena, it does not exist outside phenomena but is simply a way of pointing out that all phenomena are free from the extremes of existence and non-existence. Emptiness does not in itself exist - emptiness is empty. It is not that the concepts of existence and nonexistence do not apply because reality is nonconceptual, it is rather that existence simply cannot be found in presencing appearance, its nature is unfindable and empty.

Dependent origination is the way all perceived phenomena arise, they do not arise by itself, other, both or without causes. And in its arising no arising can be found nor place of arising, nor can any true existence be found. Is it in the mind? Outside the mind? In between? Somewhere? The smell of flower dependently originates but is unfindable, not originating anywhere. The redness of rose is not found to exist inside the flower, inside the eye, inside the mind, outside, or in between. What dependently originates is empty, unfindable, nonarisen like a mirage and reflection.

Being this way, phenomena do not truly arise and cannot have its real existence established, all phenomena are unfindable and merely appearing like reflections. Directly seeing this to be the nature of all appearance-presencing, everything has the taste of non-arisen empty exertion. So the purpose of dependent origination and emptiness is to directly realise and recognise the nature of mind/presence/appearance, as non arising and free from the extremes of existence and non-existence.

There are two levels to this. One is to realise the emptiness of all conventionally constructed entities, to free the mind from the ideas of existence and non-existence but on the conceptual layer. The other level is seeing through conventionality and recognise the nature of what appears.

...

There is a very good translation of a paragraph from a dzogchen text by Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith but I cant share things out of his group as per his group policy

But basically its about the very vivid arising without agent.. like in anatta, appearing but empty and non arisen, and arising as mere name, without place of arising nor agent of arising

...

That realisation of emptiness will become a recognition of the nature of vividly presencing appearance, you will recognise the taste and nature of all appearance as vividly present yet nothing there, empty, non-arisen like reflections

If this is not recognised then it cannot be helpful in sleep and bardo. It cannot liberate in that state. There is no room for inferential analysis in those states

...

As John Tan said back in 2013/2014:

John Tan Hi Kyle, Actually I am saying instead of attempting to deconstruct endlessly, why not resolve that that pure experience itself is empty and non-arising. In hearing, there is only sound. This clear clean and pure sound, treat and see it as the X (treat and see it like an imputation/conventional designation as you explained), empty and non-arising. In seeing, just scenery, just this clear clean and lurid scenery. Where is this scenery? Inside, outside, other’s mind or our mind? Unfindable but nonetheless appears vibrantly. This arising thought, this dancing sensation, this passing scent, all share the same taste. All experiences are like that -- like mirages and rainbows, illusory and non-arising, they are free from the 4 extremes. Resolve that all experiences are non-arising, then pure sensory experiences and conventional constructs will be of equal taste. Realize this to be the nature of experience and illusory appearances will taste magic and vajra (indestructible)! Groundless and naturally releasing! Just my 2 cents of blah blah blah in new year. Happy New Year Kyle. 2 minutes ago • Unlike • 1 February 6 at 1:50am · Edited · Like"
Manage”

Also Thusness wrote in 2014,

"There is always only conventional reality, only manifestations, only encounters. All are realized to be dependent arising and what liberates is the further realization that whatever dependently originates is empty and non-arising.

Be it pure experience or conceptuality, all are DO [dependent origination] and therefore empty and non-arising.

In anatta, there is no self... that experience of no-self is the freedom, the releasing, the freedom of Self/self... it is empty and non-arising. There is only the [five] aggregates, 18 dhatus. When you look at these dharma, it too is realized to be DO [dependent origination] and non-arising.”

It is important to understand the target of refutation, the wrong view of inherent existence.

“By inherent, I don't mean "really strong" or "not imagined" or "existed before hominids." I mean it in the Madhyamika way, independent of designation, independent of pieces and parts, and independent of conditions.” - Greg Goode

“Actually I understand clearly now about my stage 5. First is the emptiness of self that is anatta that resulted in non-dual presence. Just oneness of experience. That is, there is no-self, just manifestation. There is no hearer, just sound. But practitioner must also not get stuck at this level and see that the 'sound' is also empty. That is, object also emptied. Anatta resulted in non-dual presence by doing away with the subject and see that there is no division, but then DO [dependent origination] further empties the 'object' and one sees dharmakaya. Sound simple eh :P Took me seven years to refine my insight after non-dual presence and emptiness... hehe” - John Tan, 2009

“Hi Yin Ling, glad that "chariot" has come alive for u. Means not as just a conceptual understanding of mental constructs are empty and non-arisen but as a living taste of presence and absence.

In addition to having this taste, you may want to explore "empty of self-nature" from an experiential angle rather than analysis.

Be in anatta and while in the bliss of non-dual, see how radically different is the music and the vivid scenery; how thought is markedly different from sensations and smell; how a "shopping mall" can "transmute" into a "carpark"?

Ask urself how all these are even possible? So seamless and instantaneous is the "morphing", simply miraculous!

Ask urself again, how is this possible at all if there is essence? Let the insight of "essencelessness" permeates ur entire being and heal all ur clogged up energies.

Then look at thoughts and conceptualities. See how malleable thoughts and conceptual ideas are and see how they freely manifest. How are all these even possible if there is "essence"?

Next look at dependent arising. How is it possible to even originate in dependence so seamlessly? Feel the "essencelessness" and feel the "magic" and wonder. You must feel "essencelessness", not think essencelessness.

Then you will understand the intent of Nagarjuna. There will be no arguments. You will realize that only because of "essencelessness" are all these possible. You will understand it is precisely that there is no self-nature, there is causal efficacies; because it is dream-like, there is all these vivid appearances and happenings.

Because of this, dreams in dreams does not amount to "nothing" as Nagarjuna corrected his essentialist opponents in his Vigrahavyāvartanī. The reason why they think that insubstantial thoughts and dreams amount to nothing because all along they are "moulded" to think in a substantial way that only essential things matter.

Once you see this, emptiness, dependent arising, causal efficacies, insights and experiences will be a living authentication moment to moment in real-time. All experiential tastes will be filled with soothing radiance, openness and freedom.

Buddha be with you 🙏.” – John Tan, 2022

“Exhaustion of All Phenomena

See:

The Doctrine of No Mind by Bodhidharma (无心论）
Way of Bodhi
Wishing Prayer for the Attainment of the Ultimate Mahamudra
Madhyamaka, Cittamātra, and the true intent of Maitreya and Asaṅga self.Buddhism

"Now if one discards the wondrous, then even the very essence of the Buddha Way has no place to abide; since no though is left, no discriminative thinking takes place. Both the deluded mind and wisdom have forever expired, and perceptions and reflections are at an end - calm and without ado. This is called tai; it means the ultimate of the principle. And shang means 'without peer.' Hence it is called taishang, the ultimate. This is simply another designation for Buddha, the Tathagata."
- First Ch'an/Zen Patriarch in China, Bodhidharma from The Doctrine of No Mind by Bodhidharma (无心论）
--> essential reading, then compare with Wishing Prayer for the Attainment of the Ultimate Mahamudra and Madhyamaka, Cittamātra, and the true intent of Maitreya and Asaṅga self.Buddhism

This explanation is similar to Dzogchen and Mahamudra. At the end of the path, dharmins, dharmata, all phenomena, mind, and even rigpa/vidya (knowledge/wisdom) is exhausted. The exhaustion of all phenomena is said to be equivalent to Buddhahood and rainbow body, the ultimate.
Acarya Malcolm on Dzogchen and Advaita Vedanta

Dzogchen teacher Arcaya Malcolm taught that many people have the wrong idea that Vidya/Rigpa is some eternal thing that just goes on forever, but it too is exhausted later along with all other phenomena.

It is so clear in the original texts -- be it Zen, Mahamudra or Dzogchen. (Theravada too has clear teachings of anatta) Yet so many teachings and even authoritative teachers nowadays in each of these traditions, including Theravada, just don't get it. They reify wisdom, awareness, etc, as if they are real and eternal, falling into extremes no different from the Vedantins, etc.

.....

Also, previously:

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
after self/Self is exhausted, phenomena also needs to be exhausted
1
· Reply

· 3w

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
Image may contain: text

“Dakpo Tashi Namgyal:

You have seen the essence of Nonmeditation if your realization of nonmeditation is free from an object of remembering or familiarization so that the savoring has dissolved. You have not seen the essence if you retain a sense of something that needs to be remembered or grown accustomed to.

You have perfected the strength of Nonmeditation if the subtlest dualistic perception has dissolved and you have brought all phenomena to the state of exhaustion, so you are always indivisible from original wakefulness. You have not perfected its strength if you experience even the slightest dualistic perception and you have not exhausted the phenomena of knowable objects.

Your thoughts have become meditation if every instance of all-ground consciousness, without being rejected, has dissolved into being dharmadhatu wisdom. They have not become meditation if you retain a subtle type of propensity for conceptual clinging and the subtle tarnish of savoring an experience.

The qualities have arisen if your body appears as the wisdom *rupakaya* of the rainbow body and your mind as the luminous dharmakaya. Thus the world is experienced as all-encompassing purity. The qualities have not arisen if you retain even the slightest impure perception regarding body and mind, the world and beings.

（Comments by Soh: ‘Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal is a good book, highly recommended. You can get it for $2 at https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2020/05/mahamudra-books-for-cheap.html）

[4:27 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Interesting
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[4:27 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Dakpo tashi also related stage of nonmeditation with exhaustion of all phenomena and rainbow body
[4:27 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: So their explanation seems similar
[4:28 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: ？ Why is this interesting?
[4:28 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Dunno why i didnt notice that before.. maybe i forgot
[4:29 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: Appearances are not phenomena
[4:31 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: Exhaustion of phenomena means like the sense of observer being dissolved, the sense

of object also dissapeared.
[4:38 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah..
[4:38 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Malcolm also said exhaustion of phenomena doesnt mean no more appearance
[4:39 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: Yes
[4:39 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: You should not have that sense by now also
[4:45 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: A few years post anatta, I do not have sense of objects and physicality....objects are deconstructed by contemplating DO and total exertion. Therefore there is no seer, no seeing and nothing seen.

I am now compiling the different nuance of total exertion in taoism, zen and yoga... 🤣
[5:05 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. yeah i dont have sense of solid phenomena
[5:06 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Wow nice.. looking forward to reading 😂”
· Reply
· 3w

Mr. AA
badge icon
I've read that Buddhas have no perception from their own side, that rupakayas appear only from the perspective of beings to be "tamed". That would imply a total lack of appearances, all the while not falling into non-existence or a deep sleep type of state.
I like the idea that "no phenomena" does not mean "no appearance". Yet, that's not what the texts seem to be pointing to.

· Reply
· 3w · Edited

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
Mr. AA
Malcolm said that appearances do not cease even at the final stage/exhaustion of phenomena in the retreat. It is very clear from his teaching that ultimate Buddhahood is about apperceiving appearances as wisdom.
https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=50&t=21700&start=20
Someone asked: Does "appearance" here mean the same thing it normally does? I am a little perplexed if so. How can a Buddha be said to perceive appearances? Don't appearances end when non-dual wisdom is completely realized? I thought that appearance implies a duality from wisdom itself and that Buddhas have eliminated that.
Malcolm replied:
A Buddhas appearances are wisdom.
Tom:

Sure. But I thought appearances have ended for Buddhas, no?
Malcolm:
No. What has ended for a Buddha are impure appearances.
Tom:
I thought that "appearance" implies a duality between the wisdom itself and the appearance of that wisdom.
Malcolm:
That is true only below the 13th bhumi. The difference between a buddha on the thirteenth bhumi and the eleventh and twelfth bhumi is that buddhas on the thirteenth bhumi experience appearances as their own wisdom, whereas the lower two stages of buddhahood experience wisdom and the appearances as distinct.
https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2014/02/clarifications-on-dharmakaya-and-basis_16.html
Malcolm:
Malcolm wrote:
[Quoting gad rgyangs: in the yeshe sangthal you dissolve all appearances into the "vast dimension of emptiness", out of which "instant presence" arises. This is cosmological as well as personal, since the two scales are nondual.]
'The way that great transference body arises:
when all appearances have gradually been exhausted,
when one focuses one’s awareness on the appearances strewn about
on the luminous maṇḍala of the five fingers of one’s hand,
the environment and inhabitants of the universe
returning from that appearance are perceived as like moon in the water.
One’s body is just a reflection,
self-apparent as the illusory body of wisdom;
one obtains a vajra-like body.
One sees one’s body as transparent inside and out.
The impure eyes of others cannot see one’s body as transparent,
but only the body as it was before...'
Shabkar, Key to One Hundred Doors of Samadhi
Outer appearances do not disappear even when great transference body is attained. What disappears are the inner visions, that is what is exhausted, not the outer universe with its planets, stars, galaxies, mountains, oceans, cliffs, houses, people and sentient beings.
M
Also:
gad rgyangs wrote:
When all appearances cease, what are you left with?
Malcolm wrote:
They never cease....
Samayasattva/Jnanasattva - Page 2 - Dharma Wheel
DHARMAWHEEL.NET

Samayasattva/Jnanasattva - Page 2 - Dharma Wheel
Samayasattva/Jnanasattva - Page 2 - Dharma Wheel
1

· Reply
· Remove Preview
· 3w

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
Also John Tan just wrote:
I dunno about buddhahood. To me appearances are ceaseless and the energetic display continues endlessly because it's just one's natural radiance.
I was chatting with Tyler just the other day that although my breakthrough in experiential insights is mainly to due buddhism, my understanding is still very much taoist/ I Ching oriented. The universe is an ongoing interplay.

· Reply
· 3w

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
I resonate and concur with both their explanations
· Reply
· 3w”

[4:27 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Interesting
[4:27 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I reread this part in mahamudra book
[4:28 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Dakpo tashi also related stage of nonmeditation with exhaustion of all phenomena and rainbow body
[4:28 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: So their [Mahamudra’s] explanation [of the final state] seems similar [to Dzogchen]
[4:28 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: ? Why is this interesting?
[4:29 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Dunno why I didnt notice that before.. maybe I forgot
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“Dharmakaya to me is the result of actualising the wisdom of emptiness so that the appearance display is realized to be one's radiance clarity. But the view is free from extremes.” - John Tan, 2019

“For it is realised that other than a confused mind that mistakes conventions as true and real existence (mind/phenomena), the "nature" of phenomena has always been empty and non-arising. Once we experience Anatta and further realised how conventions fool us, then one can clearly sees, tastes, touches, senses, thinks... whatever appears is nakedly crystal, clean, luminous but empty like evanescence mist and non-arisen like mirages. Always already so! This then, in my opinion is the essence of the teaching. We are not denying consciousness but directly tasting consciousness every moment. Whenever I see dependent origination, I see emptiness and non-arising and taste what is termed pristine consciousness. So I have no issue of [with] two truths. In fact two truths perfectly described my moment to moment and non-dual experience.” - John Tan, 2015

“When the [ultimate] truth is explained as it is, the conventional is not obstructed; Independent of the conventional no [ultimate] truth can be found."
- Bodhicittavivaraṇa

“Queequeg:

I'm not sure cause and effect as you have in mind applies to the view explained through ichinen sanzen. "Since suffering and its causes do not exist..." I don't think its any sort of conventional view. As I understand, its the view taught in, for instance, the Heart Sutra:
There is no suffering, no cause of suffering, no end to suffering, no path to follow.

Malcolm:

Which actually means:

There is suffering, a cause of suffering, an end to suffering, a path to follow.

Why? "Matter is empty, emptiness is matter; apart from matter there is no emptiness; apart from emptiness there is no matter, the same for sensation. perception, formation, and consciousness."

The Heart Sūtra is merely saying there is no inherent suffering, cause, end, or path, and that the two truths, samsara and nirvana, etc., are inseparable.”

“The ultimate truth is that neither you, the child, nor the candy exist inherently. As QQ pointed out, whatever is dependently originated, that is empty and dependently designated. The two truths are inseparable” – Acarya Malcolm, 2021

" Thorough knowledge of relative truth is ultimate truth; for this reason the two truths are mutually confirming and not in contradiction at all." – Acarya Malcolm, 2021

“A lot of talk on here lately about how lame relative reality is vs how awesome ultimate reality is.
Apparently an omniscient master is supposed to see how both the relative and the ultimate exist at the same time in a Union of Appearance and Emptiness.
It's because everything is dependently arisen that it can be seen as empty.
Not even the smallest speck exists by its own power.
Je Tsongkhapa said, "Since objects do not exist through their own nature, they are established as existing through the force of convention."
He was the biggest proponent of keeping vows and virtuous actions through all stages of sutra and tantra.
He also leveraged the relative by practicing millions of prostrations and offering mandalas.
He also practiced generation and completion stages of tantra while keeping his conduct spotless.
He held conduct in the highest regard in all of his texts on tantra such as his masterwork, A Lamp to Illuminate the Five Stages.” - Jason Parker, 2019

“The Danger of Refuting Too Much: Ethics and Emptiness

"Tsong- kha- pa was particularly concerned that most of the then prevailing Tibetan interpretations of Nagarjuna’s Madhyamaka philosophy misidentified the object of negation. In his view, these widely promulgated misunderstandings of Madhyamaka subvert ethical commitments by treating them—and all other conventions—as provisional in the sense that their validity or legitimacy is obviated by the profound truth of emptiness. Tsong- kha- pa holds that profound emptiness must be understood as complementing and fulfilling, rather than canceling out, the principles of moral action. His writings aim to inspire and—as a matter of historical fact—did inspire vigorous striving in active virtue.

Tsong- kha- pa insists that rational analysis is an indispensable tool in the spiritual life. In order to make cogent the compatibility of emptiness and ethics, Tsong- kha- pa had to show that the two truths, ultimate and conventional, do not contradict, undermine, or supersede one another."

~ Introduction to Emptiness, Guy Newland”

“The birth of certainty ~ Lama Tsongkhapa
https://justdharma.com/s/ump1y

The knowledge that appearances arise unfailingly in dependence,
And the knowledge that they are empty and beyond all assertions—
As long as these two appear to you as separate,
There can be no realization of the Buddha’s wisdom.

Yet when they arise at once, not each in turn but both together,
Then through merely seeing unfailing dependent origination
Certainty is born, and all modes of misapprehension fall apart—
That is when discernment of the view has reached perfection.

– Lama Tsongkhapa

Three Principal Aspects of the Path

source: http://www.lotsawahouse.org/tibetan-masters/tsongkhapa/three-principal-aspects “

“Phase 4 and 5 are the grayscale of seeing through the subject that it does not exist in actuality (anatta), there are only the aggregates. However even the aggregates are empty (Heart Sutra). It may sound obvious but more often than not, even a practitioner who has matured the anatta experience (as in phase 5) will miss the essence of it.

As I have said earlier, phase 5 does appear to be final and it is pointless to emphasize anything. Whether one proceeds further to explore this empty nature of Presence and move into the Maha world of suchness will depend on our conditions.” - John Tan, 2009

“For Kyle, due to his view in emptiness, the experiential insight of anatta not only pierce through the self/Self but also triggered the arising insight of emptiness. However this may not be true (imo) in most cases if one's view isn't firmly established. For me when I first encountered the chariot analogy, there is an immediate and intuitive recognition that it is referring to anatta but I am unable to grasp the essence of the phrase "emptiness and non-arisen" there and then.

In other words, in addition to self immolation, a specific insight must arise, it is the prajna that clearly sees through the referent is empty and non-arisen. So anatta I would say is about severing the self/Self whereas phase 6 is the blossoming of this specific insight. Extending this insight from self to phenomena, from conventions to magical appearances is then a natural progression.” - John Tan, 2019

“Without anatta and dependent origination, there is no Buddhism. It is the difficulty of understanding selflessness and consciousness and still not fall into the stance of neo advaita that is important. Kyle seems clearer about this probably due to his direct experience of phenomena after anatta and is able to see how the conventional mind mistakes conventions as real. Real (true existence) is not needed and from Mūlamadhyamakakārikā we realize it is impossible for manifestation, cause and effect and so on and so forth to take place based on such a view. Yet appearances arise. The on

going manifestation is then realized to be dependent origination and what dependent origination finally reveals is the non-arisen and empty nature of mind and phenomena.” - John Tan, 2015

“Characteristics [of phenomena] are reifications and reifications are themselves attachment” - John Tan, 2019

“The conventional is mere designation by mind onto a valid basis of designation. The ultimate is full emptiness (a full lack of characterization) of all phenomena. All phenomena lack relationships, identity, structure, characteristics, properties, and an essence.

When the mind draws boundary conditions such as "this and that have a relationship" on a valid basis of designation, then it exists and functions as such. But, from the side of undesignated or unconstructed ultimate reality, it is utterly devoid of self-borne identities, characteristics, relationships, and so on.” - Jared K Jones

“... emptiness and dependent arising are simply tools to enable us to recognize the nature of mind and phenomena. But even post anatta, what exactly is meant by "freedom" may not be clear. One can still be trapped and awed by the radiance. In fact when I first met you, I did send you a quote regarding a tibetan master saying it is the radiance that make us lost in wisdom forum. So instead of realizing the reification and characteristics are empty, one focuses on the radiance. But not realizing one's radiance, we can't have clear understanding of DO [Dependent Origination] and emptiness too. It remains as an intellectual understanding. So it is a fine line.” - John Tan, 2019

"A “True experience” is better than a thousand words but it is also the very “true experience” of the Brilliance Bright that has blinded Mystics of all ages. The Brilliance Bright is more vivid than we can imagine. In All IT is seen and In All IT is experienced. Being vividly bright it also serves as the “condition” that obscures its very own Emptiness nature." - John Tan, 2005

“http://www.rinpoche.com/q&a.htm

Q: If the nature of mind is this all-pervading, brilliant union of luminosity and emptiness, ungraspable, how is it that it could be obscured, even for a moment, let alone for lifetime after lifetime?

{Tibetan translation}

A: Because it's too brilliant, that's the short answer. {laughter} It's like this. Luminous, brilliant emptiness, is the nature of mind. And it's been there with us inseparably for beginningless time. But the brilliance is a bit too strong. If you take the two, the factor of luminosity and the factor of emptiness, the former one, the factor of luminosity is a bit strong. A bit stronger. And because it's so strong, we don't see the empty factor. We don't see the factor of emptiness. Because of the brilliance of the mind, all these things appear, and they look so real, and we get so fascinated with it. {laughter} We're really stuck. We're really stuck on them, and we're confused, and becoming bewildered and confused by them,

then we don't realize the nature of our minds. We become completely intoxicated with the brilliance and the luminosity, and what all of what it displays to us, and we don't see the emptiness.

Now when Buddhists talk about ignorance, they don't mean some sort of black darkness, just shrouded... they actually mean it's so brilliant. It's so vivid, that we become confused by it. So we have to turn inwards and look, and see the emptiness that we've not been seeing, because we've been following after the luminosity for so long. Good example is a movie, movie comes on, we know it's just a movie, pretty soon {laughter}. We know it's somebody... picture, you know. There's human beings, and there's mountains, and there's rivers, and these wildlife and plains, and we're completely drawn to it. And it's just because its brilliance is too strong, that's why we have to turn and look at the emptiness.

{Questioner: Wow. Laugher}” - Q&A with Thrangu Rinpoche

"The emptiness of all things, however, is not nothingness; it is interdependence. It is the unity or sameness of the appearance of something and its emptiness, the unity or sameness of the lucidity or vividness of something and its emptiness. When you look at your mind, you do not find anything, and the reason you do not find anything is that the mind's nature is emptiness. But the mind is not just empty; while being empty, its characteristic, its defining characteristic, is awareness. Therefore, when the mind is described, terminology like the unity of cognitive lucidity and emptiness or the unity of awareness and emptiness is used. Unity here is meant very strongly. The nature of awareness is emptiness, and the nature of the mind's emptiness is awareness." - Thrangu Rinpoche

“Emptiness is the 'nature' of all experiences. There is nothing to attain or practice. What we have to realize is this empty nature, this ‘ungraspability’, ‘unlocatability’ and ‘interconnectedness’ nature of all vivid arising. Emptiness will reveal that not only is there no ‘who’ in pristine awareness, there is no ‘where’ and ‘when’. Be it ‘I’, ‘Here’ or ’Now’, all are simply impressions that dependently originate in accordance with the principle of conditionality.” - John Tan, 2006

“If we were to observe a red flower that is so vivid, clear and right in front us, the “redness” only appears to “belong” to the flower, it is in actuality not so. Vision of red does not arise in all animal species (dogs cannot perceive colours) nor is the “redness” an inherent attribute of the mind. If given a “quantum eyesight” to look into the atomic structure, there is similarly no attribute “redness” anywhere found, only almost complete space/void with no perceivable shapes and forms. Whatever appearances are dependently arisen, and hence is empty of any inherent existence or fixed attributes, shapes, form, or “redness” -- merely luminous yet empty, mere appearances without inherent/objective existence.” - John Tan, 2009, On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection

“What do you see?

Right and left brain dominant, if your right brain is dominant, you will see combination of pink and white color, and if your left brain is dominant, you will see it in gray and green color. Try with your loved ones, very interesting.”

“Tan Jui Horng, always good to know that what we see is hardly objective, true and real.”

“Yes. If such direct seeing is hardly objective, much less is our moment to moment of experiences that are so clouded by thoughts and concepts.”

- John Tan, 2019

“Someone wrote: This confuses me. A bus is empty of an essence. No bus can be found. But even awakened beings with realization of two-fold emptiness, self and world, would still avoid being hit by one. Either death would occur, or intense injury & suffering. So, it seems extreme, at least to me, to say there is nothing there. Yes, it's without essence, but if you're hit by it, you'll know you were hit by something.

Soh replied: There is no 'you' being 'hit' by 'something' besides conventionally. Those are all not conventionally denied, but emptiness is precisely the lack of inherent existence of conventional phenomena and conventional self. Which is to say, self and phenomena do not exist in and of itself with essence, and are purely imputed or dependently designated. Mere names. It is not the denial of conventional injury and suffering, but if injury and suffering could be found to exist somewhere (independent of designation and conditions), that would contradict dependent origination and dependent designation, and all conventional phenomena including injury and suffering would then be impossible. As Nagarjuna pointed out, if phenomena truly existed with their own substance or essence, they would be unmalleable, permanent, independent of all conditions and therefore its causation or ending could not be discerned.

Do note that all of those conditions involved are also dependently designated and empty of its own essence. For example you say that seeing depends on eye and visual object, but eye too is designated in dependence on seeing and

visual object for an eye is not an eye were it to be without the function of seeing a visual object, and a visual object would not be a visual object were it not to be perceived in/as a vivid visual consciousness via the conditions of the eye faculty. All phenomena do not exist by their own side independent of designating consciousness and dependent designation. This is the teaching of Nagarjuna and Prajnaparamita - all dharmas, all aggregates, are mere names, mere designations. And as John Tan wrote before, ""“Mere” and “cannot stand at its own side” are synonym. I suggest you to treat “mere” to mean “that it is merely labelled as the emptiness of phenomena is deep and the dependencies are profound.”" In Madhyamika, dependency on imputation is a subtler insight into dependent origination than merely dependency on conditions, and this dependency applies even to unconditioned phenomena like nirvana [the analytical cessation of afflictions and suffering] and space. The 'Sravaka schools' reject the existence of a soul or self and accepts dependency by conditions, however they may posit these conditions and arising phenomena to truly arise and have momentary essence, but Madhyamika emphasizes that even these causes and conditions and arising phenomena are dependently designated, empty and non-arisen. *(See the “Causes Dependent on Effect (Two-way Dependency)” in the latter part of this chapter)*

For example: a sun is shining, sun is designated in dependence on sunshine as much as sunshine is designated in dependence on sun. A sun that does not shine is not a sun. Hence there is no inherently existing sun or inherently existing sunshine, much less an inherently existing sun that precedes and then causes the inherently existing sunshine (therefore as Nagarjuna and Dogen taught - Cause does not precede Effects [they are dependently designated ala Nagarjuna, and totally exerted ala Dogen]) -- they are designated in dependence. A mother is not a mother before she has a child, therefore the child 'makes' the mother a mother as much as a mother 'makes' the child a child. There is no inherently existing mother that existed before the child and produces an inherently existing child. In truth, no mother, no child, just the entire situation and exertion of the whole activity at the moment. Experientially when all conventional phenomena loses their fixed 'inherent' boundaries, it feels like the whole universe is seamlessly exerting a given phenomena. You do not only see with your eyes -- your whole body, the whole sky, your entire activity, the whole universe are all involved in that seeing. That is maha total exertion. And then when we attempt to find where that phenomena of the seamless exertion exists, we do not find any essence, appearing yet empty like the reflection of moon on lake. That's the -A aspect, illusory like reflections, empty and non-arisen. Appearing yet nothing there, like a dependently originating and dependently designated "reflection of the moon on lake".

And likewise when your 'skin' 'hits' 'the wall’ and therefore there is a 'sensation', can 'hitting' and 'sensation' be singled out from each other, or from ‘wall’ and 'skin', or are each of these designated in dependence, empty, and seamlessly exerted? If skin and wall and hitting and pain all existed in and of itself independent of conditions and designation, would it even be possible for the 'hitting' or the 'sensation of hitting' to take place (conventionally speaking)? Similarly, if sun and sunshine were to have their own findable essence somewhere, could sun even be a sun and sunshine even be sunshine? For what is a sun without sunshine and sunshine without sun? Like the chariot analogy, you can't pin down the 'chariot' in any of the parts or besides the parts, chariot is merely designated in dependence on the parts, and likewise for 'self' and 'aggregates'. You can't pin down the sun existing somewhere in the sunshine or without and apart the sunshine, but they are mutually and dependently designated. And what is dependently designated is to be completely empty of some findable essence.

Hence Nagarjuna taught in Mūlamadhyamakakārikā,

"Whatever is dependently co-arisen
That is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation
Is itself the middle way.

P.229

Something that is not dependently arisen,
Such a thing does not exist.
Therefore a non-empty thing
Does not exist."

Therefore 'you' 'know' 'you were' 'hit' by 'something' - each of these elements in quotations are purely conventional, purely dependently designated, and empty. They are not elements that can be singled out as each having their own essence independent of the parts, conditions, functions, and designating consciousness. Just like sun and sunshine. If you try to find the essence of sun or the essence of sunshine, you cannot find any, only seamless and endless dependencies, like moon-reflections or the net of indra. Appearing yet unfindable. Empty and non-arisen.

Here's another analogy:

“[4/3/19, 11:46:11 PM] John Tan: For the growing process "seed to plant to tree"? Why is there "growing"?
[4/3/19, 11:51:59 PM] Soh Wei Yu: inherent existence means exist by its own side, rather than being imputed subjectively in dependence
[4/3/19, 11:52:58 PM] John Tan: Is there anything at the side of "seed to plant to tree" telling you it is growing?
[4/3/19, 11:53:07 PM] Soh Wei Yu: no
[5/3/19, 8:14:24 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Likewise touching does not exist on its own anywhere but is designated in dependence of sensation (and other factors -- e.g. hand, table, conditionality, designating consciousness), sensation too is designated
[5/3/19, 8:16:40 AM] John Tan: Yes so what differentiates "growing" process from "decaying process" if there is nothing on the side of "seed to plant to tree"? For from "seed to plant to tree" is as much a "decaying process" as the "growing process", a moment lived is a moment closer to death.
[5/3/19, 8:44:50 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Growing is depending on two points in time and perceived upward growth, then it corresponds to the convention of growing.. decay is the opposite. It’s dependent on the parts and designating consciousness
[5/3/19, 8:46:29 AM] John Tan: So what determine "growing"?
[5/3/19, 8:47:34 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Designating consciousness

[5/3/19, 8:48:46 AM] John Tan: So is the "seed to plant to tree" growing or decaying?
[5/3/19, 10:20:05 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Both but Only conventionally.. not intrinsically”

In this analogy, if growing exists inherently by its own side rather than designated conventionally, then it could be 'findable'. But, it's not...

And although it is not findable, not inherently existing, it is conventionally valid to speak of growing and decaying.” - Soh, 2019

“A human being is growing up/ageing/dying dependent on conventions, valid from the perspective of conventional truth, which means a given phenomenon is accurately observed through unimpaired senses and tallies with socially agreed convention.

At what point in life is one considered "getting old" and not just "growing up"? Even a 10 year old child can be considered getting old, but sometimes we say a 70 year old person is getting old. The moment we are born, our terminal condition called life starts and we begin a temporal journey to death. We are dying as much as we are growing. How we designate a point as growing up and getting old is very much dependent on convention, it does not truly exist by its own side.

An arising phenomena ceases as soon as it arises, is this moment of phenomena arising, or is it ceasing?

No intrinsic arising, abiding or ceasing of any phenomena can be discerned.

Only conventionally do we say a phenomena is arising, or ceasing, or growing, or maturing, or ageing, or decaying.” - Soh, 2019

“In anatta, it is clearly seen that there is no need for any timeless presence other than the appearances themselves.

In the consequent school of the gelug, it is clearly understood that there is no need for any foundation consciousness to ground the conventions, there is only groundless conventions. Freedom from marks (no marks) is simply to see the emptiness of the conventional. The import of both are the same, they share the same taste.” - John Tan, 2019

“There is no question that what exists merely due to the existence of conceptuality and does not exist without the existence of conceptuality is, like a snake imputed to a coiled rope, to be ascertained as not established by way of its own entity.

~ Chandrakirti”

“If something exists only if conceptuality, that is, the conceptual consciousness imputing it, exists and this thing does not exist if conceptuality does not exist, then it does not inherently exist. However, it is undeniable that things do appear to us as if they inherently exist and that, based on this, we conceive them to exist inherently.” - Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way

“[6/3/19, 7:23:00 PM] John Tan: They do not require a ground foundation consciousness, do not seek presence, what do they rely on to release?
[6/3/19, 7:23:52 PM] Soh Wei Yu: The release of the sense of phenomena truly there that can be found when sought, existing with Essence, by itself or on its own side
[6/3/19, 7:24:07 PM] Soh Wei Yu: The conventions are seen to be empty
[6/3/19, 7:24:22 PM] John Tan: 👍”

Mr. A asked, "Soh, what's your view on "other minds" or "other experiences"?"

Soh replied, "The same as "my mind" and "my experience", which is to say, completely conventional and dependently designated by designating consciousness like a chariot, floor, trees, seed, plant, growing, decaying, [everything you can name], and when sought for no referent entity could be found, hence ultimately empty and non-arisen.

For the delusion of inherent existence is precisely this notion that these things - minds, chariots, floor, trees, seed, plant, growing, decaying, exists by its own side, where in truth they are merely named and imputed in dependence on the parts, conditions, functionality, and importantly - the designating consciousness that imputes dependently (and these parts/conditions/functions/designating consciousness/conventions involved too are mere names, designated in dependence), these entities, agent, action and act, cause and effect, objects and characteristics, etc etc.

Kyle Dixon just wrote something in the Mahamudra/Dzogchen group which basically says what I'm saying:

“My own wife and children are not ultimately real. Yours are not exempt.”

"Emptiness does not negate conventions, it reveals that all conventions are merely inferential. They do not refer to substantial entities because those entities cannot be found when sought.

Substantial entities, dharmas, i.e., entities which bear characteristics, are figments of delusion.

This is why emptiness is taught to be the freedom from the four extremes of existence, non-existence, and any combination of the two.

Because entities which accord with the extremes of existence and non-existence are mistaken cognitions.

Hence Shantideva states:

“When an existent or a nonexistent does not exist before the mind, at that time since there is no other aspect [concepts] are fully pacified as there is no objective support [dmigs pa, ālambana].”"

Mr. A replied, “For something to be conventionally real, it requires a basis of designation. What's the basis of "other experiences"? All that is found is "this experience", which is a label designated upon current appearances.”

John Tan replied, “The basis of designation is not appearances. The basis of designation is still designations.”

Mr. A asked, “what's the designating consciousness that imputes labels?"

Soh replied, "Designating consciousness is the conceptual consciousness that designates, which is to say a thought, a designation.

Like a seed~sprout is "growing" or "decaying" dependent on designation of consciousness rather than existing by its own side. If it were inherently and objectively existent as the characteristic of objects, then it would be fixed, and there would only be one fixed way of seeing it/things. All phenomena are dependently designated."

“After anatta there is no background, only taste. But a further realization sees that the taste is empty and merely designated. Floor is designated with no referent. Even to conceive of brown, red, yellow, is dependently designated, although they are valid as conventions. When sought for, the referent cannot be found. They are not truly existing by its own side as some findable object to be pinned down. Brown is brown by convention, not an inherently existing attribute of something somewhere to be found.

Also you have to see the living perception of solid brown of floor as the convention, not as a verbal word divorced from the perception. That it is to say, the seemingly solidity of floor or brown existing by itself “there” is suddenly discovered to be a mere imputation and nowhere to be found at all. By investigating the perception of brown or floor or any apparent object in direct perception, it is found to be unfindable and merely designated in dependence rather than existing by own character or own side. The point is not to think of the word “brown” and then say that’s empty, but discover the very solidity and inherency of foreground aggregates in anatta to be empty and nonarisen so that the nature of presencing is realized to be its non-arising and emptiness. Then it becomes a taste of appearance-emptiness, illusory like moon-reflections and mirages, appearing but nothing there. Then appearances auto refute existence by its appearance, and those appearances never amounts to anything arising or any kind of substantial entity, such that they are automatically seen to not be anything existing by its own side.

Therefore it is not verbal words we are negating but the very inherency of the aggregates even in direct perception of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) and anatta” - Soh, 2019

“You have underestimated Soh.

How can one that on post anatta not know the "seeming first hand experience that is beyond words"? For experience is already effortlessly non-dual and "luminous".

That is precisely his emphasis,

"Therefore it is not verbal words we are negating but the very inherency of the aggregates even in direct perception of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) and anatta"

He is referring even this seemingly luminous, non-conceptual, and free experience is tainted. Still carry "mark" to be negated, a very subtle one. Therefore Tsongkhapa taught, first identify the "characteristic mark" to be negated.

Intuiting a basis free from subjectivity and objectivity, "internality" and "externality" is also a tainted characteristic (in my opinion).

Even seeing "blue" as dependent origination that arises with causes and a host of conditions still carry a mark. It is easy to see "brown", "red", "forms", "floor", "taste" as dependent origination, it is difficult to see that they are dependent designations.

Soh may sound as if everything is merely labels and designations, but he is just practicing hard to integrate this aspect into his realization. Nevertheless repeatedly saying "merely designated" may not be good when developed into a habit. Just my two cents.” - John Tan, 2019

“William Lim:
So, there are different mindstreams, and different non-dual self-knowing appearances "appears" to the different mindstreams yah? For Weiyu, it's the stars in Australia. For William, it's the laksa in Singapore.
3d
Like
Reply
Active
Soh Wei Yu
William Lim
Yes. Mindstreams are also conventional without inherent existence. It is merely a name for a causal rosary of discrete moments, just like the word “mala” is just a name imputed on 108 beads strung together, or the word “army” is a name for a collection of soldiers, or the word “weather” is a name for a plethora of various everchanging phenomena, etc, but no real entity or core or essence can be found whatsoever when sought. Ultimately individual minds are also mere imputations that cannot be found. But since it is functional, we say it is conventionally valid to name different minds/mindstreams as such, just as it is conventionally valid to call you “William” and I am “Soh”. But no self/Self can ultimately be found.

3d
Like
Reply
Edited

Active
Soh Wei Yu:
Answering someone on whether it is the “same mindstream” that is reborn, Kyle Dixon explained,
“It is neither the same nor different, like a series of candle flames that light one another sequentially.
From the Pratītyasamutpādakarikavhyakhyana:
Therein, the aggregates are the aggregates of matter, sensation, ideation, formations and consciousness. Those, called ‘serially joined’, not having ceased, produce another produced from that cause; although not even the subtle atom of an existent has transmigrated from this world to the next.”
3d
Like
Reply
Active
William Lim:
There is no self or inherent existence in a mala or an army, but there is still a kind of "difference" between one mala and another, or one army from another ya? For the appearances (and function) of Soh is "different" from the appearances of William
The designation aren't randomly and arbitrarily assigned ya? For we do not assign the body of Soh together with the chair he sits on as a unified designation. There must be "something" that makes one conventionally impute to a "Soh" or a 'William"... namely some form of congregation of appearances. "Something" differentiate one non-inherently existent cloud from another non-inherently existent cloud?
3d
Like
Reply
Edited
Active
Soh Wei Yu:
Designations depend on the basis of designation which are parts and conditions. These parts and conditions are also name only, and empty. So names all the way down.
Although it is not wrong to say our “appearances” are different, we should be careful not to reify appearances as an ultimate ground of conventions, which will make appearances the foundational or fundamental reality. Appearances also become falsely reified as a real ground when concepts are reified. Presence/appearance is ultimately groundless and illusory.
John Tan said something nice before,

“Not only that. Like anatta, where an agent is not needed to initiate actions, a hearer not needed to initate hearing of sounds; Tsongkhapa wants us to see:
Designation too does not require pure appearances or real aggregates as basis, then what designations r designated upon? It is designations upon designations and designations functions.
In other words, to Tsongkhapa, the inability to understand how nominal reality (existing as name only) can function is what makes us fall into the need of landing onto a real basis.
This does not mean that Tsongkhapa did not experience of taste radiance as appearances in anatta insight free from a background self without name constructs, but he has additional insight of about how "designations" works without relying on basis.”
3d
Like
Reply

Active
Soh Wei Yu:
but you are right that designations are not random or arbitrarily assigned.
Acarya Malcolm:
"“Conventional” simply means “functional,” it does not mean arbitrary or subjective. For example, perceiving water as amṛta, pus, boiling metal, etc., is invalid in the human realm.
One can build many kinds of cars, but if they don’t function as cars, they are not cars, conventionally speaking."
"No, conventions are not subjective, they are conventions because one or more people have agreed to call a functional thing a given name. For example, a truck is called a lorry in England, but they both refer to a heavy vehicle that carries loads."
"Conventional truths are derived from observing functional appearances. Falsehoods are derived from observing nonfunctional appearances. Example, lake vs. mirage."
"No, it is not more correct to say consciousness arises or ceases than a labelled self, a since consciousness is also a conventional label, like the label "self." Prior to analysis there is both a self, akuppa, and a consciousness. After analysis one will find neither self nor consciousness, beyond the designations "akuppa" and "consciousness." For example, take a car as a metaphor for "self". A car cannot be found in any part, all of its parts, or separate from its parts. Likewise, as self cannot be found in any aggregates, all of the aggregates, or apart from the aggregates. Likewise, consciousness cannot be found in the sense organ nor the sense object, both, or separate from them. The mind is also made of parts, and cannot be found in one of them, all of them, or separate from them.
Functionally speaking, we can say there is a self, because when I say "akuppa go there!" You will respond to this directive by saying yes or no. This means that "self" is functional. It is efficient. Whatever is functional corresponds with relative truth. If I said to you, "Malcolm go there!" you would respond, "I am not Malcolm." So calling you "malcolm" is not functional and therefore cannot be considered to be relatively true. Consciousness is a relative truth, as long as it performs its functions, then we can say "there is a consciousness." But when we analyze consciousness, we cannot find it outside of the conventions we use for an appearance we label "mind.""
Continue reading at https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/03/some-quotes-by-acarya-malcolm-smith.html

Acarya Malcolm Smith on Conventional vs Ultimate Truth

“ – Excerpt from https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/10/are-stars-outside-your-body-or-inside.html

“Here's a way to see that brown (the apparence, not the label or designation) is dependent . Firstly, I find it easier to talk in terms of adverbial modifiers instead of subject-object. I.e we don't see brown, we see brownly. Or we see don't see brown table, but we're experiencing in a brownly-tably manner. Now, in order for us to say that we experiece brownly-tably; that is, that we experience in some particular manner (brownly-tably), as oppose to merely experiencing as such, we have to subtly appeal to some contrasting notion that is not present (i.e some reference to not-brownly (such as another color) or something that is not a table, etc). In other words, If all you could ever experience was brownly-tably then you wouldn't have words that signify that as opposed to something else, just as if you're a fish and only ever experience water you wouldn't have a word for "water" - it's only when water is contrasted with something else (air) that there's a point to conceptualize water; that there's a need to distinguish it from something else. So how come you say that you see brownly-tably, and not that there's just "seeing as such"? How come there's seeing in some particular manner? It's because of this: You say you experience brownly-tably because you believe that experiencing can come in different forms; that can be designated with different adverbial modifiers. And there's your appeal to not-brownly, not-tably) I.e brownly-tably depends on notions that references appearances that are not present. Absent these notions, brownly-tably is not brownly-tably at all, it's just non-dual luminosity. Now, non-dual luminosity can of course be deconstructed further just as brownly-tably can...” - Göran Backlund

“[21/7/19, 7:32:29 PM] Soh Wei Yu: The very emptiness of the “thing” immediately implies its unfindability and unlocatability. If I look at the patch of grass, the sense that “the greenness of green grass is there” is the very sense of thingness, of locatability. The very seeing that greenness is completely imputed and unfindable anywhere in the basis is seeing the emptiness of greenness. Appearances therefore is seen to be empty of any itness anywhere at all, all phenomena are merely conceived. For nowhere in the various shades of green can I pinpoint that “this is where the green is” nor can it be found apart, but is merely imputed. The undesignated display is by nature empty of true existences as all existence of phenomena are merely conventionally imputed, not existing by its own side in the basis of designation. As such they are no different from a mere luminous shimmering mirage or reflection with nothing findable whatsoever. All phenomena are like mere chariots”

Mañjuśrī: “What is the root of the imagination which constructs something that is not actually there?” Vimalakīrti: “A perverted perception.” Mañjuśrī: “And what is the root of the perverted perception?” Vimalakīrti: “The fact that it has no support.” Mañjuśrī: “And. what is the root of that?” Vimalakīrti: “This fact, that it has no support, it has no root at all. In this way all dharmas are supported on roots that have no support.”

- Vimalakirti Nirdesa Sutra

(Scroll down for more on “**Conceptual and Dependent Designation**”)

“Soh: no self besides only taste is still stage 5. It seems that you have not realised stage 6, otherwise you will express precisely this in heart sutra and see how precise it is:

“Here, O Sariputra,
all dharmas are marked with emptiness ;
they are not produced or stopped, not defiled or immaculate, not deficient or complete.
Therefore, O Sariputra,
in emptiness there is no form nor feeling, nor perception, nor impulse, nor consciousness ;
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind ; No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind ; No sight-organ element, and so forth, until we come to :
No mind-consciousness element ; There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so forth, until we come to : There is no decay and death, no extinction of decay and death. There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path.
There is no cognition, no attainment and no non-attainment.”

- Heart Sutra https://www.dharmanet.org/HeartSutra.htm

“"Nirvāṇa is an illusion. Even if there is anything greater than Nirvāṇa, that too will be only an illusion."400 A Bodhisattva is a mere dream. Even the Buddha is only a name. Even the Perfect Wisdom itself is a mere name. Dreams, echoes, reflections, images, mirage, illusion, magic, void—such are all objects of intellect.401” - Prajnaparamita Sutra, The Concept of Sunyata in Mahayana Sutras

“A dream is all this, an echo, a reflected image, a magical creation, a mirage. Therein there are no skandhas, elements or sense fields, and also no dream or one who sees it, no echo or one who hears it, no reflected image, magical illusion, or mirage, and no one who sees them, no magical creation and no one who creates it.

All these dharmas are nonentities and have nonexistence as their nature; you perceive skandhas, elements, and sense fields where there are none. All these dharmas are due to conditioned coproduction, they have originated from the perverted views, and they have been taken hold of as the result of karma. How, then, is it that you become perceivers of entities which are in fact nonentities?” - The Large Sutra on Perfect Wisdom (Prajnaparamita Sutra)

"Through this the eyes, visible forms and so forth, which are described as the elements, these should be known also as [the twelve] sense-fields, and as the objects and the subjects as well.

Neither atom of form exists nor is sense organ elsewhere; even more no sense organ as agent exists; so the producer and the produced are utterly unsuited for production." - Nagarjuna

"In terms of objects and subjects, whatever appears to the consciousness, apart from the cognitions themselves, no external objects exist anywhere.

So there are no external objects at all existing in the mode of entities. The very perceptions of the individual consciousnesses arise as appearances of the forms." – Nagarjuna

The Buddha attempted to capture these realizations in The Heart Sutra when he stated:
There are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind. There is no seeing, no hearing, no smelling, no tasting, no touching, no imagining. There is nothing seen, nor heard, nor smelled, nor tasted, nor touched, nor imagined.

Devoid of all real entities;
Utterly discarding all objects and subjects,
Such as aggregates, elements and sense-fields;
Due to sameness of selflessness of all phenomena,
One's mind is primordially unborn;
It is in the nature of emptiness.
- Nagarjuna

- Quoted from Kyle Dixon in his excellent explanations in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/03/a-sun-that-never-sets.html

“The catch, is that we aren’t. The aggregates are an upāya, a means to comprehend our condition, but they are only a stepping stone, not an ultimate truth.
Nāgārjuna states:
Just as the Buddhas have spoken of "I" and "mine" for a practical purpose; Likewise they spoke too of "aggregates," "elements" and "sense-fields" for practical reasons.

- Kyle Dixon”

14/4/13 7:15:32 PM: John Tan: When buddha tell us there is sound and sound consciousness, it is only provisional
14/4/13 7:16:15 PM: John Tan: It is to point to the empty nature of consciousness so that we do not grasp
14/4/13 7:16:49 PM: John Tan: If we take it literally you would have fallen to the mistake of true existence of sound
14/4/13 7:17:05 PM: John Tan: Is there sound as an object?

“John TanThursday, December 19, 2013 at 11:54pm UTC+08

in the bahiya sutta, you said in the seen, just the seen...there is no-seer + seeing + seen...

John TanThursday, December 19, 2013 at 11:55pm UTC+08

so is that all? how do you apply this understanding to "ear organ"?

John TanFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:10am UTC+08

your explanation about anatta is very narrow and limited. you must be able to see the link and understand as a whole process. your emphasis is simply always about in the seen, just the seen...about no behind background. that is simply experience. You do not see the DO [dependent origination]. You do not see it is empty because every label when seen through is a formation of DO, being a convention, it is empty
Soh Wei YuFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:13am UTC+08

ear organ is also an imputed convention based on auditory-consciousness/experience of sound isnt it
John TanFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:13am UTC+08

ear-organ...what is ear-organ? what is eye-organ? how does modern science understand eye-organ
Soh Wei YuFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:14am UTC+08

forgot :P light enters retina, gets reflected etc.. haha
John TanFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:14am UTC+08

lol...
Soh Wei YuFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:15am UTC+08

in direct experience eye is just bodily movement and vision movement
John TanFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:15am UTC+08

so isn't eye-organ like the word "weather"
John TanFriday, December 20, 2013 at 12:15am UTC+08

don't talk about direct experience. i already told you, you skewed towards experience. many can have that experience but still have inherent view in a state of no-mind. but when you have the experience and with right view, you do not have an I, mine...and gradually free from those. in DO [dependent origination], how can there be an I and what exactly can be said to be "mine" or ownership or doership. in DO [dependent origination], you see formation. in seeing, just the seen.....no seer..., did you see DO?”

“3.12

“Śāradvatīputra, the ‘six outer sense fields’ are merely conceptualized. Anything that is conceptualized neither arises nor ceases, and is only conventionally designated by names and symbols.

Even the names of the six outer sense fields do not exist internally, nor do they exist externally, and nor do they abide between these two.”

Daśasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā
84000.co

“Soh Wei Yu
Saw this post today and reminded me of something I wrote yesterday.
Wrote this yesterday while explaining a point to someone:
A reflection of the moon does not "come from" the moon, no real moon arrived from somewhere like a passenger arriving from a taxi from outer space, rather there is simply an empty and lucid appearance that dependently originates. Nothing 'goes' or comes out from the surface of the pond when the conditions change, e.g. cloud covers. Further we all know that a reflection is merely illusory, not inherently existing somewhere nor can it be found. That reflection, being merely appearing yet not existent, cannot be said to be produced or born - for what merely reflects as an illusion in dependence on a host of conditions and disappears without them, how can it be said that something is truly produced or born anywhere at all? Yet we cannot say the appearance arose without a cause -- clearly without a clear surface of a pond in a cloudless night and clear moon in the sky, the reflections could not have occurred. All phenomena when investigated are like that -- appearing and yet not existent, merely in dependence.
Furthermore, if we say that the drum, the stick, the person hitting the stick on the drum, the vibrations of the air, the ears, so on and so forth are the causes of hearing, or we say that sound originated from somewhere, then exactly which elements of these does the sound originate from? Each of these elements are not a self sufficient cause, but collectively then the sound manifest, does it mean there is a producer somewhere responsible for producing it? We find that it is a completely agent-less process of dependent origination.
Dogs see black and white flower, humans see red roses, other animals may see other colors never seen by humans or something else entirely, does the redness of rose originate from the rose or from the human mind? If it arise from human mind then a rose would not have been necessary, you can just close your eyes and you should see red flowers, or you should continue to see and smell the red flower when someone removes it from your sight. We know that is not true. But if it arise from the rose itself or is inherently produced by the rose or the redness exists inherently in the rose as its characteristic, then why does a dog and other animal not see the same thing? So on and so forth. In the end, we can only talk about conditionality and dependencies, but not inherent causation, origins, agents, producers, and inherent production.
From this we know that "coming from", "going to", does not apply. Real production from self and other does not apply as explained in the article. We can only say "dependently originates", and what dependently originates are ultimately empty, non-originating, and illusory.
Only conventionally do we establish causes and effects, and those cause and effect are also not inherently produced by self or other -- they merely arise interdependently.”

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[4:09 PM, 5/26/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Kyle said in 2018, “Antarctica can be generated by mind without vanishing when it isn't cognized. This is the entire import behind the Yogācāra principle of a container universe, which is also implemented in Vajrayāna.”
[4:10 PM, 5/26/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[4:11 PM, 5/26/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Malcolm said, “There are two Buddhist models of perception: Model A is externally triadic, that is, a percept arises based on the contact of a sense organ with an external sense object. Model be is internally triadic, holds that percepts are the actually the activation of traces that provide the content of the world that we perceive as external.
Madhyamaka is happy with either model. Both are relative, not ultimate.”
[4:12 PM, 5/26/2019] Soh Wei Yu: “Lonchenpa and Dzogchen in general does not reject external objects.”

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I believe Malcolm is more into Model B's conventionally although in the end they are all realised to be empty.

Regardless of which model you pick, after MMK analysis, there cannot be an objective universe. Although one does not necessarily subsume into some subjectivity. Both are empty.

As JT said before, "Also there cannot be objective world in emptiness..."

[9:47 PM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: Conventionally speaking means when you are using language and socially accepted and agreed norms
[9:49 PM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: Then you can go all way down to talk about what is valid and invalid cognition but it gets combersome which is too dry for me. 🤣
[9:54 PM, 6/3/2020] John Tan: Stian has an article where he said he made a mistake that he assumes an external world that can be independent of mind but in actuality, he can't because he is always using mind and within the environment and always a base factor...so he said mind and phenomena have the same nature. Forgotten the details...do you have that article?

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[12:37 AM, 1/28/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I think the trigger point is realising the emptiness and non arising of presence, not merely label or construct
[7:42 AM, 1/28/2020] John Tan: Now how can "anything" non-arise?
[11:16 AM, 1/29/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Means appear but nothing there or originated.. only a radiant appearance like reflection. Doesnt amount to anything
[9:46 AM, 1/31/2020] John Tan: This there nothing there, originated, only a radiant appearance?
[9:47 AM, 1/31/2020] John Tan: you must understanding that without realizing that phenomena and mind/clarity are of the same nature, it can't be understood this way.
[9:52 AM, 1/31/2020] John Tan: So one must realize the fundamental issue because phenomena seem so solid, real and objective. The Awareness teaching on the other hand errs towards the other extreme of subsuming which has the same root of ignorance as assuming a true and objective world out there.

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[9:20 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: In equipoise, there is neither mind nor object. Post equipoise conceptual level, there is always diversities and duality, there DO, empty and non-arisen.
[9:20 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[9:21 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: So you see the role of total exertion?
[9:23 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. so total exertion is when there are conventions in post equipoise
[9:23 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: then anatta nonconceptual is like equipoise?
[9:24 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: It is like a blending taste...
[9:33 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: Exactly Matt James is not wrong...lol
[9:33 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: what do you mean
[9:35 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: I think Malcolm should be more open...lol
[9:36 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: My view and understanding is not different from Malcolm.
[9:40 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: I mean integrate quantum view instead of seeing mountain as there in dualism.
[9:41 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: Quantum view too is conventional. why must you see mountain to be there at all rather than probabilistic waves?
[9:44 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: Since he accepts appearances are mind but not appearing objects as mind. Appearing objects is just conventional, so why not adopt quantum theory explanation?
[9:48 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: ic..
[10:14 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: Btw Malcolm is accepting two truth theory from what he said
[10:19 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. but he says conventional truth is deluded. So in the end is one truth.. and he quotes nagarjuna or something on that
[10:19 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: So in equipoise there is only ultimate truth i think
[10:32 AM, 7/25/2020] John Tan: The only truth is to see the emptiness of the conventional. Equipoise strictly speaking is free from all elaborations. That is exactly the experiential insight and taste of anatta, in the seen just the seen, therefore no seer, no seeing, nothing seen.
[10:39 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[10:43 AM, 7/25/2020] Soh Wei Yu: like kalaka sutta

...

[12:56 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Yes that is what I told u
[12:56 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Snag ba
[12:56 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Appearances
[12:57 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: But external object do not exist
[12:57 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: This must also be understood
[12:58 AM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[12:59 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you deconstruct, you deconstruct object the phenomena
[12:59 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Object that possess characteristics
[1:00 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: The deconstruction does not deny it
[1:00 AM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: ic..
[1:01 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Otherwise that is subsuming into mind only
[1:01 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: That is why I said Malcolm does not have to deny quantum theory
[1:03 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: you don't have to be attached to apparent object as this is merely conventional, it can be understood as probability wave

[1:03 AM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[1:03 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Appearance are mind is a direct taste and experience post anatta.
[1:04 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: But are there objects?
[1:05 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Objects are construction like body is a construct...u get what I mean?
[1:10 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Did I tell you there is no denial of you, others, things...only the I and the aggregates...
[1:11 AM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[1:12 AM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: yeah so its not denying external objects but the inherentness of it.. doesn't exist in a self-sufficient manner or independent of conditions or in terms of four extremes
[1:13 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Objectivity creates the impression that there is an independent something out there having characteristics
[1:16 AM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[1:18 AM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: But this is not true at all, objective reality is a concept that arises, dependently with subjective experience...

.....

[2:35 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: In terms of deconstructing objects, i see in terms of dependent origination but not in terms of subsuming to subjectivity
[2:35 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: In a sense i agree with malcolm.
[2:35 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I dont reject objects conventionally
[2:36 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I dont say antarctica doesnt exist at the moment nobody is observing it. Clearly the melting ice in antarctica due to global warming is affecting the whole world even if nobody is there observing it at the moment

Yet when we look into the nature of phenomena, of appearance, all are seen as empty dependent arising, empty appearance
[2:36 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Cannot say exist, or do not exist
[2:37 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I dont resonate with idealist doctrines or yogacara for this reason
[2:37 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: But at the same time i do not resonate with the inherent existence materialist paradigm of actual freedom
[2:43 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: If we see that things exist somewhere like in antarctica that means one doesnt see the emptiness and dependent origination of conventional phenomena and appearance
[2:44 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: If we say redness of flower exist in mind, then why would there need to be the eyes, the hand holding up the flower, the flower, the space in between?
[2:45 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: If we say redness exist in flower, then dogs would see redness too
[2:46 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I dont like the idea redness is in the mind because its just “dreamt up”
[2:46 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Like what some yogacara like doctrines sounded sometimes
[2:46 PM, 10/3/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Lol
[2:56 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: This I have written to you many times
[2:56 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: Read back what I told

[2:56 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: Many years back
[2:57 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: Not you dont exist or Wei yu doesn't exist
[2:58 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: It is when constructs are deconstructed, what how understand the flux of vivid appearances.
[3:02 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: But how Malcolm express imo also incorrect.
[3:03 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: It should be it does not exist the way we think instead of it exists.
[3:29 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: I do not entertain myth stories and live in wonderland as I am a pragmatic person. Practice to me is not about philosophy, it is experientially authenticated in real-time, moment to moment. De-construction of self and phenomena, lead to non-dual experience is a quite a systematic and scientific approach and how it liberates the mind.

Although I am not a materialist, I do not reject science esp quantum mechanics but I leave it to solve their mysteries.

What I am interested is to see through how conventionalites and reifications confuse, blind and hypnotize the mind and the way of freeing me from that.

I do not engage in idle talks and speculations that are not helpful to practice.
[3:38 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: Buddha taught the six sense base, 6 sense organs and 6 consciousness. But we know that eyes do not see, ears do not hear...these are common and conventional world way of communication.
[3:40 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: The deconstruction of seeing through essence need not follow strictly. We can deconstruct with modern scientific knowledge, air, wave, eye drums...etc
[3:41 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: So to me it is just silly and naive to follow blindly and brainlessly otherwise we are no different from those that believe flat earth theory.
[3:42 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: 🤣
[3:45 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: I mean I do not reject quantum mechanics. I am also a great believer of aliens and UFO...🤣🤣🤣
[3:54 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: The laws that govern the very massive objects and the law that govern the man size world and the laws that govern quantum world are different.
[3:55 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: We think that the speed we travel is everything because we never really travel close to speed of light.
[3:59 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: Similarly we cannot use experience of man size world to understand the world of the very small, the quantum world...they don't behave the same. We don't just reject thousands and thousands of repeated experiments by credible and responsible scientists saying "I don't believe".
[4:02 PM, 10/3/2020] John Tan: And yet we use daily products and technologies created by applications of these scientific laws. Best part is we didn't even know a fraction of what it [is].

...

[8:47 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: you are talking about clarity and appearances, but Malcolm and longchenpa and tsongkhapa are not talking about that. They are talking about appearing objects.
[8:47 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I think malcolm said something like appearance may be mind but appearance and objects of appearance of conventionally distinct?
[8:47 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Are
[8:48 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Not sure his understanding though
[8:49 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: So therefore I always asked what are appearances to them and in order to sort out what these traditions mean, you cannot assume. you need to know the Tibetan language.
[8:49 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Like snag ba
[8:50 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: My impression is that yogacara is idealist because they totally negate external world even conventionally and posit that all phenomena are purely projections of consciousness like it is literally a dream
[8:51 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: For me I have my own way of sorting out my view, experience and insights from Buddhist contexts. Where it starts and stops. I am not a follower of faith.
[8:51 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Whereas certain forms of madhyamika, longchenpa and tsongkhapa dont necessarily buy thus
[8:52 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Prasangika do not care about mind at all
[8:52 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Same for me post anatta...
[8:52 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah in fact post anatta i resonate more with AF than yogacara
[8:52 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: It is not that mind is not important in practice..
[8:53 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Except i see in terms of dependent origination and emptiness now [therefore in another sense, after twofold emptiness, I do not resonate with AF]
[8:53 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: In zen though they say there is no mind, they in fact embrace mind more fully than all is mind, until no trace of mind can be detected. Yet Shen Yen said this is just the entry point of zen because originally there is no mind and this is clearly realized in anatta. So post anatta, mind and phenomena are completely indistinguishable.
If both mind and phenomena are completely indistinguishable in experience, then distinctions are nothing more than conventional designation of empty luminous display.
[8:54 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. btw did sheng yen realise anatta?
[8:56 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: So you must know when we say no awareness, no self, no I, it doesnt mean nothing. It is seeing through the background construct and open the gate to directly taste, experience and effortless authenticate clarity.
[8:57 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: I believe so but he did not talk about his experience except the stanza before his death that is beautiful.

Conceptual and Dependent Designation

“Different types of dependency: several people have given examples, and here's another one.

A table..

1. A table depends on legs, a top, screws and braces (parts)
2. A table depends on being constructed, and trees, and sun and air, and builders (causes and conditions).

3. A table depends on being conceptualized and designated as a table.

This is the subtle one. Let's say you see a leg and a top. Do you see a backrest? No, so you won't call this a chair. The designation goes like this - you see some forms, and make them out as legs and a top. You give those forms the name, label, designation of "table."

This is subtle because the table is not exactly equal to the parts. The table cannot equal the parts, because then, if the parts change, the parts would be different, and so, following the equation, the table would have to change. Another reason the equality cannot hold is that there are many parts and only one table. The table cannot equal the *collection* of parts, because if the parts change, or if a leg gets broken off, or swapped out, then the collection changes. So the table would have to be a different table.

But we really don't want to say that the table would be different just because the parts are different. We want to somehow say that the table can remain relatively stable as the same table, even if the parts change, or get painted, etc.

And at the same time, we cannot find a truly existent, unchanging table behind or within the parts. If we did find such a truly existent table, then we wouldn't need to designate the parts as a table. But we do. It makes no sense that the table would really be a table if no one had ever in history designated anything as a table.

So we allow ourselves to end up saying, in a loose, conventional way, that the table depends on the parts, but is not the parts. It's a table in name only. This kind of naming is the designation-aspect of the dependency.

And this loose, conventional approach to tables and selves and life and all things is the experience of emptiness. It's a free, flexible, sweetly joyful, open-hearted way of life....” - Greg Goode, 2013

“And also functionality. A Chariot continues to function even with some of its parts missing. Dependencies based on parts, causes and conditions, relations, functions and imputations.” - John Tan, 2013

“Why do you believe there’s such a thing as a ‘sentient being’?
Māra, is this your theory?
This is just a pile of conditions,
you won’t find a sentient being here.
When the parts are assembled
we use the word ‘chariot’.
So too, when the aggregates are present
‘sentient being’ is the convention we use.
But it’s only suffering that comes to be,
lasts a while, then disappears.
Naught but suffering comes to be,

naught but suffering ceases.” - Vajira Sutta

John tan:

“To me, realization simply means authenticating the view experientially; in other words, an experiential insight and taste of the view like anatta or emptiness or non-arisen of "chariot" in real-time.”

Also see: Another Kind of Self-Inquiry: Chandrakirti’s Sevenfold Reasoning on Selflessness

“For me, the initial insight of anatta was mainly what I have stated in scenario 2 -- seeing through the center that the center has always been assumed, it is extra. In reality it does not exist.

Up until this point of anatta, I was very much a non-conceptual advocator, less words more experience. I have heard of the word “Kong 空” (Emptiness) numerous times but never exactly know what it truly meant. The idea of Emptiness struck me probably “2 years later when I came across the chariot analogy of the Buddhist sage Nāgasena. There was an instant recognition that the analogy is precisely the insight of anatta and anatta is the real-time experiential taste of the “Emptiness” in relation to self/Self except that it is now replaced with “chariot” in the example.

The insight was huge and I began to re-examine all my experiences from the perspective of "Emptiness". This includes mind-body dropped, the impression of hereness and nowness, internal and externality, space and time...etc. Essentially a journey of deconstruction, that is, extending the same insight of anatta from the perspective of emptiness to all phenomena, aggregates, mental constructs and even to non-conceptual sensory experiences. This led to the taste of instant liberation at spot of not only the background (self) but also the cognized, seen, heard, tasted, smelled and sensed without the need to subsume either subject into object or object into subject but liberates whatever arises at spot.

The deconstruction process reveals not only the taste of freedom from freeing the energy that is sustaining the constructs (in fact tremendous energy is needed to maintain the mental constructs) but also a continuous formation of a perceptual knot that blinds us in a very subtle way and that relates to scenario 3 -- Seeing through the fundamental nature of the perceptual knot itself. Seeing the nature of perceptual knot involves in seeing clearly certain very persistent and habitual patterns that continues to shape our mode of knowing, analysis and experience like a magical spell. The perceptual knot is the habitual tendency to reify and Emptiness is the antidote for this reifying tendency.

The journey of emptying also convinces me the importance of having the right view of Emptiness even though it is only an intellectual grasped initially. Non-conceptuality has its associated diseases... lol... therefore I always advocate not falling to conceptuality and yet not ignoring conceptuality. That is, strict non-conceptuality is not necessary, only that habitual pattern of reification needs be severed. Perhaps this relates to the zen wild fox koan of not falling into cause and effect and not ignoring cause and effect. A koan that Hakuin remarked as "difficult to pass through".

Not falling, not ignoring.

A word different, a world of difference.
And the difference causes a wild fox for five hundred lifetimes!
A long post and time to return to silence.
Nice chat and happy journey David!”

- John Tan, 2013

“**THE CHARIOT**

And King Milinda asked him: "How is Your Reverence known, and what is your name, sir?"

"As Nagasena I am known, O Great King, and as Nagasena do my fellow religious habitually address me. But although parents give name such as Nagasena, or Surasena, or Virasena, or Sihasena, nevertheless, this word "Nagasena" is just a denomination, a designation, a conceptual term, a current appellation, a mere name. For no real person can here be apprehended."

But King Milinda explained: "Now listen, you 500 Greeks and 80,000 monks, this Nagasena tells me that he is not a real person! How can I be expected to agree with that!" And to Nagasena he said: "If, Most Reverend Nagasena, no person can be apprehended in reality, who then, I ask you, gives you what you require by way of robes, food, lodging, and medicines? Who is it that guards morality, practises meditation, and realizes the [Four] Paths and their Fruits, and thereafter Nirvana? Who is it that killing living beings, takes what is not given, commits sexual misconduct, tell lies, drinks intoxicants? Who is it that commits the Five Deadly Sins? For, if there were no person, there could ne no merit and no demerit; no doer of meritorious or demeritorious deeds, and no agent behind them; no fruit of good and evil deeds, and no reward or punishment for them. If someone should kill you, O Venerable Nagasena, would not be a real teacher, or instructor, or ordained monk! You just told me that your fellow religious habitually address you as "Nagasena". Then, what is this "Nagasena"? Are perhaps the hairs of the head "Nagasena?"

"No, Great King!"

"Or perhaps the nails, teeth, skin, muscles, sinews, bones, marrow, kidneys, heart, liver, serous membranes, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach, excrement, the bile, phlegm, pus, blood, grease, fat, tears, sweat, spittle, snot, fluid of the joints, urine, or the brain in the skull-are they this "Nagasena"?"

"No, Great King!"

"Or is "Nagasena" a form, or feelings, or perceptions, or impulses, or consciousness?"

"No, Great King!"

Then is it the combination of form, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness?"

"No, Great King!"

"Then is it outside the combination of form, feelings, perceptions, impulses, and consciousness?"

"No, Great King!"

"Then, ask as I may, I can discover no Nagasena at all. This "Nagasena" is just a mere sound, but who is the real Nagasena? Your Reverence has told a lie, has spoken a falsehood! There is really no Nagasena!"

Thereupon, the Venerable Nagasena said to King Milinda: "As a king you have been brought up in great refinement and you avoid roughness of any kind. If you would walk at midday on this hot, burning, and sandy ground, then your feet would have to trend on the rough and gritty gravel and pebbles, and they would hurt you, your body would get tired, your mind impaired, and your awareness of your body would be associated with pain. How then did you come on foot, or on a mount?"

"I did not come, Sir, on foot, but on a chariot."

"If you have come on a chariot, then please explain to me what a chariot is. Is the pole the chariot?"

"No, Reverend Sir!"

"Is then the axle the chariot?"

"No, Reverend Sir!"

"Is it then the wheels, or the framework, of the flag-staff, or the yoke, or the reins, or the goad-stick?"

"No, Reverend Sir!"

"Then is it the combination of poke, axle, wheels, framework, flag-staff, yoke, reins, and goad which is the "chariot"?"

"No, Reverend Sir!"

"Then, is this "chariot" outside the combination of poke, axle, wheels, framework, flag-staff, yoke, reins and goad?"

"No, Reverend Sir!"

"Then, ask as I may, I can discover no chariot at all. This "chariot" is just a mere sound. But what is the real chariot? Your Majesty has told a lie, has spoken a falsehood! There is really no chariot! Your Majesty is the greatest king in the whole of India. Of whom then are you afraid, that you do not speak the truth?" And he exclaimed: "Now listen, you 500 Greeks and 80,000 monks, this King Milinda tells me that he has come on a chariot. But when asked to explain to me what a chariot is, he cannot establish its existence. How can one possibly approve of that?"

The 500 Greeks thereupon applauded the Venerable Nagasena and said to King Milinda: "Now let You Majesty get out of that if you can!"

But King Milinda said to Nagasena: "I have not, Nagasena, spoken a falsehood. For it is in dependence on the pole, the axle, the wheels, the framework, the flag-staff, etc, there takes place this denomination "chariot", this designation, this conceptual term, a current appellation and a mere name."

"Your Majesty has spoken well about the chariot. It is just so with me. In dependence on the thirty-two parts of the body and the five Skandhas, there takes place this denomination "Nagasena", this designation, this conceptual term, a current appellation and a mere name. In ultimate realtiy, however, this person cannot be apprehended. And this has been said by our sister Vajira when she was face to face with the Lord Buddha:

"Where all constituent parts are present, the word "a chariot" is applied. So, likewise, where the skandhas are, the term a "being" commonly is used."

"It is wonderful, Nagasena, it is astonishing, Nagasena! Most brilliantly have these questions been answered! Were the Lord Buddha Himself here, He would approve what you have said. Well spoken, Nagasena! Well spoken!"” - The Questions of King Milinda (As Answered by the Arahant, Nagasena)

Also see: Another Kind of Self-Inquiry: Chandrakirti’s Sevenfold Reasoning on Selflessness by Greg Goode

“With regard to the way in which things are posited through the force of conceptuality, Aryadeva’s Four Hundred says:

Without [imputation by] conceptuality [like the imputation of a snake to a rope], there is no [finding of] the existence of desire and so forth. If so, who with intelligence would maintain that a real object is produced [dependent on] conceptuality? [For, being imputed by conceptuality and existing as its own reality are contradictory.]

Chandrakirti’s commentary on this passage says:

There is on question that what exists merely due to the existence of conceptuality and does not exist without the existence of conceptuality is, like a snake imputed to a coiled rope, to be ascertained as not established by way of its own entity.

Therefore, conceptuality [here refers to] this ordinary, innate awareness which makes designations of forms and so forth through having become accustomed again and again since beginningless time to thinking, “This is a form,” “This is a feeling,” and so forth.

[The example of a rope-snake illustrates] how things are posited through the force of [ordinary innate conceptuality]. When darkness has fallen on a rope, it is thought to be a snake since the variegated colors of the rope and the way in which it is coiled are like a snake and it is seen in a dim place. At that time, neither the color of the rope, its shape, its other parts, nor the collection of those parts may be posited as something that is a snake. The snake of this occasion is only a mere designation by conceptuality in dependence upon the rope.

Similarly, when the thought “I” arises in terms of the five [mental and physical] aggregates that are its bases of designation, neither the individual aggregates, the collection, their continuum, nor their parts can be posited as something that is I. Furthermore, there is not in the least any phenomenon that is a separate entity from those [mental and physical aggregates] and can be apprehended as something that is I. The I is merely posited by conceptuality in dependence upon the aggregates.

Although the way in which all phenomena are imputed by conceptuality is, in this way, like the imputing of a snake to a rope, a rope-snake and phenomena such as forms are not the same with respect to whether or not they conventionally exist. For they are dissimilar in terms of whether or not conventional valid cognition damages an assertion [made] in accordance with what is being imputed.

Furthermore, with respect to how [phenomena] are mere nominal imputations, one engages in adopting [virtues] and discarding [non-virtues] in dependence on mere nominalities which are conventions designated to these phenomena such as forms, “This is a form,” “This is a feeling,” and so forth, and through this, desired aims are accomplished. Also, within the context of mere nominality, all affirmations and negations of correctness and incorrectness, etc., as well as all agents, actions, and objects are possible. However, if one is not satisfied with mere nominalities and enters into searching to find the object imputed in the expression “form”, [trying to discover] whether it can be taken as color, shape, some other factor, or the collection of all these, and so forth, one will not find anything, and all presentations [of phenomena] will become impossible.

Making presentations of what is and is not correct in the context of mere nominalities is most feasible. For example, there were two villagers who went to a city to see the sights. They went into a temple and began to look at the paintings, whereupon one of them said, “That one holding a trident in his hand is Narayana; the other holding a wheel in his hand is Maheshvara.” The other villager said, “You are mistaken; the one holding a trident is Maheshvara, and the one holding a wheel is Narayana.” And thus they disputed.

A wandering holy man was nearby. They went up to him, and each spoke his thought. The wanderer thought, “Being murals on a wall, these are neither Maheshvara nor Narayana.” Although he knew that, still he did not say, “These are not gods, but paintings.” Instead, in conformity with the conventions of the world, he told the two villagers that one of

them was right and the other wrong. Through his speaking thus, the wishes of the two villagers were fulfilled, and the wanderer also did not incur the fault of telling a lie.

Likewise, although all phenomena do not have objective establishment, presentations such as, “This is correct, and that is incorrect,” are feasible within the context of mere nominalities. Although the Supramundane Victor [Buddha] sees that all phenomena do not truly exist, even he teaches the adopting [of virtues] and discarding [of non-virtues] using terminology as the world does, thereby bringing about the welfare of transmigrators.

This way [of presenting nominalities] was taught by Buddhapalita, a great master who had attained yogic feats, in his commentary on the eighteenth chapter of Nagarjuna’s Treatise on the Middle Way. The honorable Chandrakirti and the revered Shantideva also, through many examples and reasonings, explain still other ways in which agent, object, and action are feasible within the context of mere nominalities. I will not elaborate more on the topic here.

This presentation of conventions is the uncommon way in which the three masters [Buddhapalita, Chandrakirti, and Shantideva] comment on the thought of the Superior [Nagarjuna]. The Foremost Omniscient Father [Dzong-ka-ba] and his spiritual sons [Gyel-tsap and Kay-drup] frequently advised that just this is the final difficult point of the Middle Way School view.

About this way [of presenting conventionalities], the Questions of Upali Sutra says:

These alluring blossoming flowers of various colors
And these fascinating brilliant mansions of gold
Are without any [inherently existent] maker here.
They are posited through the power of conceptuality,
The world is imputed through the power of conceptuality.

And the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sutra* says:

Nirvana is not found
In the way nirvana is taught
By words to be profound.
The words also are not found...

And a *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* says:

It is this way: this “Bodhisattva” is only a name. It is this way: this “enlightenment” is only a name. It is this way: this “perfection of wisdom” is only a name...

And the Superior Nagarjuna’s *Precious Garland* says that name-only does not exist ultimately:

Because the phenomena of forms are
Only names, space too is only a name.
Without the elements, how could forms
[inherently] exist?
Therefore even “name-only” does not [inherently] exist.”

- Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way, Jang-gya’s Text

“[It has been said:]

Whatever was acceptable to someone in the past,
that should work for him [to begin the practice].
A person who is confused
Is never a [suitable] vessel for the holy teachings.

Moreover, in the scriptures the Bhagavan said:

The world has a dispute with me.
I do not have a dispute with the world.
What the world accepts I accept.
What the world does not accept I do not accept.

[And in the *Catuhsataka* 8.19, Aryadeva says:]

Just as a foreigner is not able
to understand a language other than his own,
so the world is not able
to understand anything but the affairs of the world.

And so on. This [view, that everything that is real by convention exists, was taught] by the Bhagavan for people in need of guidance [and] in whom the desire has awakened to hear something about the generally accepted way in which things are actually distinguished. The aggregates, the elements, and the bases of perception are, in truth, conceptualization. They are obtained by the impaired vision of ignorance. This much of the truth has been described by the Bhagavan from that perspective for the purpose of giving rise to a more significant life for the worldly person.” - Chandrakirti

"Don’t misunderstand the term “mere imputation” wrongly. It is very important to understand the term “mere” is very special in Prasangika. “Mere” and “cannot stand at its own side” are synonym. In other words, you can treat “mere” to mean “because the emptiness of phenomena is deep and the dependencies are profound, it cannot be expressed but

called it ‘mere’”. Much like Tao cannot be expressed, very reluctantly, Lao Tze named it Tao. It is completely opposite of our common usage like “don’t worry, it is merely a label”.

The very fact that phenomenon are empty of inherent existence means that phenomena are not existing at their own side therefore this “mere designation” cannot be eliminated in the ordinary sense; in fact there is no elimination, you can’t. To free it, one must see “Emptiness” and Dependent Origination. Because of the profundity, if one practice the inferring and reasoning path, there are various lines of reasoning like diamond silver, sevenfold reasoning, unfindable as one or many, four extremes and lastly of course, the king of reasoning Dependent Arising to guide the practitioners towards right understanding.

Thus this “mere imputation” can’t be overcome by deep shamatha concentration; can’t be overcome by ordinary non-conceptuality; can’t be overcome by non-thinking because it is “dependent” on its basis; it is not just a designation. Even the cessation of Nirodha-samapatti cannot do away with this “mere imputation” permanently.

In Prasangika, only the intuitive insight of prajna wisdom of both self/Self and Phenomena is able to break the chain of specific dependent origination because ignorance as the root cause of cyclical existence is severed.

Anyway just my 2 cents. Please read and understand with yor own insights and experiences. See you in Singapore!" ~ John Tan, 2014

“[9:00 AM, 7/26/2018] John Tan: I see conceptual designation as a process that includes naming and labelling. Naming and labeling is at the end of the process. If we just focus on naming and labeling, we end up rendering wordless perception as the destination.

When mind designates, it does not have to name. When we open eyes, the natural tendency to see distinctly a group of features (BOD Basis of designation) into one even before naming is considered designation (imo).

Therefore to me, designation includes wordless perception. When form or sound arise, those already are forms of mind designation. Otherwise practice would be very surface and not deep down into mind tendencies and energy level. Anatta deconstruction is at the level of pre-labelling.
[9:01 AM, 7/26/2018] John Tan: That is how I understand designations”

[5:36 PM, 3/29/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Looking at the tree [in a PCE mode of wordless anatta perception].. seems like a huge entity but when examined is not one or many, many branches and leaves swaying in different directions.. just like chariot and h2o is just an essenceless display of interdependence
[5:38 PM, 3/29/2020] Soh Wei Yu: The perception of tree is shaped by conditions and views.. in truth nothing can be found, unborn
[5:38 PM, 3/29/2020] Soh Wei Yu: A vividly luminous and empty display

“Soh: Actually in anatta and emptiness, there is no absolutes, no noumenon. Especially in emptiness, everything is conventions. Even the nondual perception of a pure sound, sight, floor, is seen as dependently designated, with no essence whatsoever when sought. The complete unfindability of a referent of a convention is precisely the emptiness of that convention, and all conventions are equally empty and dependently designated.

...

Mr. G wrote: ‘Without relying on convention, the ultimate will not be understood."

I disagree.

The taste of orange can be conventional when described..... or, not at all.’

Soh replied: Taste of Orange is already two conventions combined. The moment concept arises to establish taste, orange, know that is designation. Taste of orange does not exist objectively or inherently somewhere to be found, when examined no taste of orange can be found despite whatever appearances that serves as conditions for the designation, and those appearances too cannot be found. Is taste the characteristic of orange or is orange imputed subjectively in dependence on taste, and other factors too? Is taste truly existing and findable or is it too imputed? Just like the red of the rose does not exist objectively in the rose, for it depends on conditions (only humans and certain species can see red) and on designating consciousness that names 'red' and then attributes 'red' to 'a rose', and the rose too does not exist inherently, objectively, by its own side, independent of imputation and the factors [other conventional and designated phenomena] that contribute to that imputation of rose, including the 'red color' (which too is conventional). Prior to designation, there is no taste of orange. Even during the designation, there is no taste of orange for the taste of orange cannot be found to exist anywhere besides a designation that depends on a whole host of other conventional phenomena and designations, it does not exist objectively, inherently. The parts of the car does not amount to an inherently existing car existing by its own side, for the car, and even the parts, are designated in dependence on the designating consciousness and a whole host of factors, which too are dependently designated.

A state without or prior to designation or where thoughts and concepts are suspended is not the end of ignorance, for there must be the realization that all phenomena are designated in dependence (on parts, conditions, function, designating consciousness) and empty of existing by its own side [which is to say, empty of inherent existence -- inherent existence means existing by its own side independent of imputation], empty of any essence. And this applies even to seemingly pure taste, touch, sights, in PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) mode.”

“It is also important to know that because of this thorough on going "becoming", when expressed in a conventional and relative world, it has to be expressed as dependent arising and emptiness.

In other words, because the mind designates using static conventions, it has to qualify these conventions with dependencies to present the flux. "Dependent arising and emptiness" is simply a more elegant way of presenting "change without changing thing".

Taking the growing process of the seed to plant and plant to tree example, if we divide it into a million frames and asked at which point has the seed become a plant and at which point it becomes a tree? They will say it "depends", whichever frame they choose. The frame they chose is the designation, the "it depends" are the dependencies. The designation is only valid within the set of dependencies that defines it...

...By the way, even the fluxing view of dependent origination is put to the challenge in prasangika... and it is the key of dependent designation.” - John Tan, 2019

“Steve, Madhyamika interprets the "thingness" gestalt as a type conception, a way of reacting or conceptualizing words or concepts or sensations, as if there were existence involved. Maybe some words seem to invite this kind of reifying conceptualization more than others - we usually feel that more physical-sounding, more concrete words entail a more independent kind of existence. But Madhyamika would refute this kind of existence across the board.

Does "dependent arising" require there is (A) something dependent that arises, and (B) something that A is dependent on? Even though Madhyamika itself refutes this?

Not according to Madhyamika itself. When A is said to be dependent, the meaning is that it is not INdependent. It is not self-sufficient, it has no essence or true nature.

What does "dependent" mean? Dependence is usually broken down into three types. Phenomenon A relies on pieces and parts, on conditions, and on conceptual designation.

But none of these things (pieces + parts, conditions, conceptual designation) is an inherent, self-standing thing. Each of these things itself dependent.

This kind of dependency is not linear, tracing back to an original first cause or universal stopping point. It's more like a web of dependencies. It's not arboreal, it's rhizomatic.” - Greg Goode

Causes Dependent on Effect (Two-way Dependency)

Two-Way Dependency/Dependent Designation
Also see: What Buddha Taught about Consciousness
Emptiness as Unity

“Here is Ācārya Malcolm’s brief summation of this section of the MMK, and his citation of Buddhapalita’s commentary:

Nāgārjuna's arguments run in three phases: first, self-arising is negated; then, arising from others is negated; and finally causeless negation is negated. Of these three types of arising, the second is what we conventionally term "arising."

[However] Things do not [truly] arise. Why? Because their causes and conditions cannot be established when investigated. This is why Buddhapalita states [in his commentary on Nāgārjuna’s Mūlamadhyamakakārikā]:

Here, with respect to your claim for an ascertained cause for the production of a result, wheat, etc., and a non-productive condition and non-condition, ‘the arising of a result is not accepted’ was previously explained.

If that result does not exist, where will ‘these are not conditions, these are conditions’ be accepted? If both of those come to be from depending on a result, also that result is does not exist. Because the result does not exist, where will there be a non-condition or a condition? If that is so, still results are not accepted, and even conditions and a non-conditions are non-existent. Because results, conditions, and non-conditions do not exist, descriptions for arising are merely conventional.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

John Tan
Now in hearing, there is only sound. In total exertion, not only the ears heard, the eyes, the hair, the entire body hears...there is no eye, no ear, no body...all six entries are one function and even that act of hearing is profoundly deconstructed.

Or let's say just anatta, in hearing there is only sound. If you search for
"sound", you can never find it. If you try to find the line of demarcation
that separates sound and the conditions that give rise to it, can you find that line?

Soh
nope

John Tan
In non-conceptual mode of anatta, just a dimensionless sphere of clear "tingsss" and even saying that is too much. Is there separation of the bell, the ear, the stick, the air...etc? All is profoundly exerted into the suchness beyond speech. However when you expressed conventionally, must you not see the dependent arising, the causal dependencies?

So you must know at the ultimate it is expressed as if there is no sound, no conditions but at the conventional it is expressed as Dependent Origination.

Therefore if one does not see Dependent Origination, he will not see the ultimate correctly. To teach emptiness is to to see Dependent Origination and to see Dependent Origination is to see emptiness. Appears therefore empty, empty therefore appears. There is no emptiness without appearance and no appearances that is not empty.
John Tan

Just read Greg's comments. He pointed one important point that is mutual dependency. In Prasangika, this mutual dependency is quite unique and important but not in the sense that they affect or produce each other but they (cause and effect) are mutually dependent for their conventional existence. For example we normally think sound is causally dependent on its causes and conditions for its arising but in Prasangika, sound is dependent on its conditions and the conditions are also dependent on sound for their existence. Why so? This is important to understand total exertion.

Soh

its like without sunlight, the sun would not be the sun... sunlight makes sun what it is conventionally.. sound actualizes a bell, and blowing wind actualizes a fan

interesting.. if we think of computer screen as an entity, then the images on the screen and the screen is only a one way dependency. the images are dependent on the screen and the screen is not dependent on the images... the screen will always be the screen (until it gets 'destroyed') and the images come and go, shows on and off. but seeing the lack of intrinsic existence of screen and image... then it’s like water pouring into water, screen and image co-emerge in total exertion... its not youtube happening on a screen... the screen is manifested through youtube and it is youtube-screen. the same goes for consciousness... that’s why buddha said consciousness is reckoned by its conditions (reference: http://www.leighb.com/mn38.htm)...

(comments by Soh: The same can be said in many other examples: Plane and Flying (we may think of 'flying' as something that 'plane' is 'doing', but what does the co-emergence of plane and flying and the lack of intrinsic identity of both tells us?), Subject-Action-Object, etc...)

John Tan
Well said. The heart of total exertion and emptiness...feel it. you are beginning to bring the taste of total exertion into "view". Even in conventionality and conceptuality, the experience of "water pouring water" in meditative equipoise can be brought into actual taste. +A and -A can be integrated.

p.s. This excerpt by Dogen is worth repeating: “Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise the sails and row with the pole. Although you row, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat no one could ride. But you ride in the boat and your riding makes the boat what it is. Investigate such a moment.”

Also, अष्टावक्र शान्ति posted nice quotes from Dalai Lama:

"Something is not a cause in and of itself; it is named a “cause” in relation to its effect. Here the effect does not occur before its cause, and its cause does not come into being after its effect; it is in thinking of its future effect that we designate something as a cause. This is dependent-arising in the sense of dependent designation." - H.H Dalai Lama

"But when you take it further, the dependent-arising of cause and effect comes because of dependent designation, which itself indicates that cause and effect do not have their own being; if they did have their own being, they would not have to be dependently designated." - H.H Dalai Lama

HHDL's explanation on dependent designation is very clear! Funny how I didn't see it in the past though I read through his book before:

https://books.google.com.au/books?id=kqvlPsyV33IC&pg=PA190&lpg=PA190#v=onepage&q&f=false

Dependent Designation is a key teaching of Madhyamika:

"Whatever is dependently co-arisen
That is explained to be emptiness.
That, being a dependent designation
Is itself the middle way.
Something that is not dependently arisen,
Such a thing does not exist.
Therefore a non-empty thing
Does not exist. "

-- Nagarjuna

"If there is something which exists, it must originate dependently and be designated dependently. Why? There are no phenomena at all that are not dependently originated, therefore, a non-empty phenomena does not exist." - Buddhapalita

.....

Wrote more: 21/12/2014: Water pouring into water may be understood as mere non-division of subject and object, in fact you hear descriptions of how the realization of Atman-Brahman is like pouring a drop of water into the great ocean, and so on.

However, the water pouring into water in Madhyamika has a more subtle meaning. The subject and object, realization and object of realization, etc etc is released like water pouring into water. This means seeing the selflessness, the emptiness of self and object, screen and images, plane and flying, car/driver/driving, etc etc leads to the taste of empty and non-dual seamless exertion.

For example now you no longer see yourself as an independent driver existing independent of the driving (driver is dependently designated in dependence of driving and car), driving a car which is mistakenly seen to exist independent of the driver and driving. Neither are you saying the driver collapses into the car or the car collapses into the driver. Rather, by seeing how driver, car and driving are dependent and empty, then car, driver, driving, environment 'melts' into empty, non-dual seamless exertion. Your riding makes the boat what it is.

In this case, subject and object are non-dual like Advaita but not really the same in view, because you are not collapsing one pole to another but releasing them into non-obstruction.

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https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/adrqp1/what_does_nagarjuna_mean_when_he_says_causes/

What does Nagarjuna mean when he says causes depends on effects?

Question
He seems to mean this in more than just referential way as in “East land” cannot exist without “Westland” where the notions of Eastland and Westland cannot exist without each area but the area can. So Eastland physically can exist without Westland but it’s referential name cannot.
But Nagarjuna seems to suggest the cause itself cannot exist without the effect. Could someone explain this please? Are there any texts/commentaries which go in-depth about this?
Thanks.

krodha

But Nagarjuna seems to suggest the cause itself cannot exist without the effect. Could someone explain this please? Are there any texts/commentaries which go in-depth about this?
Nāgārjuna gives the example of a parent and child. The parent creates the child, but the child also creates the parent.
The cause [parent] cannot be established without the effect [child].
In Madhyamaka, causes and effects are interchangeable and bilateral. Every cause is an effect and every effect a cause.

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"In brief from empty phenomena
Empty phenomena arise;
Agent(cause), karma(action), fruits(effect), and their enjoyer(subject) -
The conqueror taught these to be [only] conventional.

Just as the sound of a drum as well as a shoot
Are produced from a collection [of factors],
We accept the external world of dependent origination
To be like a dream and an illusion.

That phenomena are born from causes
Can never be inconsistent [with facts];
Since the cause is empty of cause,
We understand it to be empty of origination."

- Nāgārjuna

Four Levels of Insight into Emptiness

- 01 ANATTA - realizing the complete absence of a background self/Self;
- 02 Appearances like empty mist, transient and evanescent, but still momentarily arising-abiding-ceasing in flickering instants;
- 03 Seeing absence (non-arisen nature) in vivid presence (Beginning of truly entering Stage 6) - in clear vivid non-dual appearance, realize it is never there at all. At this phase, there must be complete conviction without the slightest doubt from logical analysis in understanding why it is "never there".
- 04 Turning #3 into a taste, merging the two mindstreams (Dependent Origination + Emptiness). The key is in recognizing the taste of absence (i.e translate the logical and inferring consciousness into a taste).

More details: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2015/01/an-expansion-on-four-levels-of-insight_10.html

Nine Points on Anatta to Emptiness

John Tan wrote 9 points to Taiyaki (Albert Hong) after his realisation of anatta back in 2012:

"There are several points that maybe of help to Taiyaki:

1. First there must be a deep conviction that arising does not need an essence. That view of subjective essence is simply a convenient view.

2. First emptying of self/Self does not necessarily lead to illusion-like experience of reality. It does however allows experience to become vivid, luminous, direct and non-dual.

3. First emptying may also lead a practitioner to be attached to an 'objective' world or turns physical. The 'dualistic' tendency will resurface after a period of few months so it is advisable to monitor one's progress for a few months.

4. Second emptying of phenomena will turn experience illusion-like but take note of how emptying of phenomena is simply extending the same "emptiness view" of Self/self.

5. From these experiences and realizations, contemplate what is meant by "thing", what is meant by mere construct and imputation.

6. "Mind and body drop" are simply dissolving of mind and body constructs. If one day the experience of anatta turns a practitioner to the attachment of an 'objective and actual' world, deconstruct "physical".

7. There is a relationship between "mental constructs", energy, luminosity and weight. A practitioner will experience a release of energies, freedom, clarity and feel light and weightless deconstructing 'mental constructs'.

8. Also understand how the maha experience of interpenetration and non-obstruction is related to deconstructions of inherent view.

9. No body, no mind, no dependent origination, no nothing, no something, no birth, no death. Profoundly deconstructed and emptied! Just vivid shimmering appearances as Primordial Suchness in one whole seamless unobstructed-interpenetration."

On another occasion, Thusness wrote (not to Taiyaki):

“...Like after anatta, as I have said many times the sense of externality and physicality can still be very strong. My deconstruction process of "externality" and "physicality" is actually based few questions: 1. Why is mind which is "mental" is able to "interact" with something "physical"? 2. Why does consciousness need conditions for its arising? 3. What is interaction? All these questions help stabilized my experiences when I penetrated them in my own way.

Illusion like realization (arose) when I contemplated "hereness" and "nowness" until my mind was able to intuit the logic behind all these, then experience becomes stable. However one can enter by experience to have a taste of it...”

There is a very good video by Alan Watts that I highly recommend to watch in its entirety as it addresses the issue of whether there is objective reality and the interrelationship between an organism and its environment: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Dg7VlvvM88&feature=youtu.be

Dependent Origination

“This dependent arising is the dharmakāya of all the tathāgatas. A person who sees dependent arising sees the Tathāgata.”

— Āryapratītyasamutpādanāmamahāyānasūtra

Dogen, Shōbōgenzō:

"Tathagatas [Buddhas] never go beyond clarifying cause and effect"

“Unless one understands dependent origination as the Buddha taught it, one will not realize emptiness.” – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2018

“What is meant by dependent origination? It means that nothing included within inner or outer phenomena has arisen without a cause. Neither have they originated from what are not their causes; that is, noncauses such as a permanent creator [in the form of] the self, time, or the Almighty. The fact that phenomena arise based on the interdependence of their respective causes and conditions coming together is called dependent origination. To proclaim this is the unique approach of the Buddha’s teaching.

In this way, the arising of all outer and inner phenomena require that their respective causes and conditions come together in the appropriate manner. When these factors are incomplete, phenomena do not arise, while when complete, they will definitely arise. That is the nature of dependent origination.

Thus, dependent origination ranks as an essential and profound teaching among the treasuries of the Buddha’s words. The one who perceives dependent origination with the eyes of discriminating knowledge will come to see the qualities that have the nature of the eightfold noble path, and with the wisdom gaze that comprehends all objects of knowledge will perceive the dharmakaya of buddhahood. Thus it has been taught.

Jamgon Mipham Rinpoche”

“There are two *[aspects of dependent origination]*, general (non-afflictive) and specific (afflictive) D.O. *[dependent origination]*. Both are enlightened views. Means the mind suddenly stops seeing self and he must drop self/Essence view.” - John Tan, 2015

“When the mind divides and see separation, D.O. and emptiness is the excellent tool to de-construct essence and triggers the insight of anatta and emptiness. So it is the enlightened view.” – John Tan, 2020

John Tan wrote in 2014, "Be it Buddha himself, Nagarjuna or Tsongkhapa, none [of them] never got overwhelmed and amazed with the profundity of dependent origination. It is just that we do not have the wisdom to penetrate enough depth of it." and "Actually if you do not see Dependent Origination, you do not see Buddhism [i.e. the essence of Buddhadharma]. Anatta is just the beginning."

“"The view of production and destruction must be clear. What is the right view of such an experience?

The ‘tree’ as total exertion cannot be said to arise or not arise. As Nāgārjuna aptly states, whatever arises in dependence is empty and thus non-arisen. Those who think in terms of true arising, abiding, and cessation hold a perverted view (颠倒) and have not realized the true meaning of ‘dependence.’ If you do not see dependent origination (DO), you do not see emptiness—there is no emptiness without DO.

People who preach only about emptiness are often teaching awareness in disguise, no matter how elegantly it’s presented. There may be a direct touch of awareness or presence, yet without insight into the ‘nature’ of presence itself (明心但未见性). Both aspects—awareness and emptiness—are equally important.

After realizing anatta, if one's understanding leans toward total exertion, like the ‘tree’ and ‘cosmos,’ it is essential to revisit and examine 'Awareness' or 'Presence.' In doing so, the ground of being itself will be shaken and not stand too, then experience is both groundless yet cosmic. Exertion becomes spontaneous and natural.”” – John Tan

"Buddhism is not about attaching to a special immutable essence that is unborn and eternal but the arising of prajna wisdom that brings about the cessation of flawed perception of "birth" and "death", existence and non-existence. This is the process of specific (afflictive) Dependent Origination that starts from ignorance. Therefore I told you dependent origination is the enlightened view. For the unenlightened do not understand or see it this way." - John Tan, 2015

“The Buddhas know that all phenomena arise interdependently.

They know all world systems exhaustively.

They know that all phenomena in all worlds are interrelated as in Indra's net." - Avatamsaka Sutra

"Seeing afflictive Dependent Origination is enlightened view because one sees Dependent Origination. There is no [insight into] afflictive Dependent Origination for sentient beings, there is *[the conceiving of a]* Self/self... they do not see Dependent Origination." - John Tan, 2014

“John Tan: Because there is mind, if there is no mind, what happened?

Soh: Just activities, thoughts, scenery, sounds.

John Tan: What is the sense of self in anatta?

Soh: The activity of grasping.

John Tan: Very good and well said.

The anatta insight not only sees through background but directly perceives dependent origination, both afflictive and non-afflictive. Self is that afflictive dependent origination that arises from ignorance. It is that formation. The general dependent origination becomes the effortless spontaneous presence when ignorance is not in action. Both are directly experienced in real-time. So with anatta insight, no-self is authenticated. Afflictive D.O. chain is authenticated, general D.O. is authenticated, the purpose of vipassana is authenticated from moment to moment in real-time. What doubt is there?” - John Tan, 2019

Here, the Buddha says what the fruit of stream entry entails:

“Monks, there are these six rewards in realizing the fruit of stream-entry. Which six? One is certain of the true Dhamma. One is not subject to falling back. There is no suffering over what has had a limit placed on it. [1] One is endowed with uncommon knowledge. [2] **One rightly sees cause, along with causally-originated phenomena.**

"These are the six rewards in realizing the fruit of stream-entry."

- AN 6.97

The Buddha also taught,

"When a disciple of the noble ones has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising & these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present, it is not possible that he would run after the past, thinking, 'Was I in the past? Was I not in the past? What was I in the past? How was I in the past? Having been what, what was I in the past?' or that he would run after the future, thinking, 'Shall I be in the future? Shall I not be in the future? What shall I be in the future? How shall I be in the future? Having been what, what shall I be in the future?' or that he would be inwardly perplexed about the immediate present, thinking, 'Am I? Am I not? What am I? How am I? Where has this being come from? Where is it bound?' Such a thing is not possible. Why is that? Because the disciple of the noble ones has seen well with right discernment this dependent co-arising & these dependently co-arisen phenomena as they are actually present."

— SN 12.20

“Conditioned reality” as in the twelve links in operation is samsara itself, but realizing it is dependently originating is not a samsaric view because sentient beings do not realize dependent origination, it is the deep wisdom of Buddha that he realised dependent origination on the night of his awakening, such that he said,

“Deep is this dependent co-arising, and deep its appearance. It’s because of not understanding and not penetrating this Dhamma that this generation is like a tangled skein, a knotted ball of string, like matted rushes and reeds, and does not go beyond transmigration, beyond the planes of deprivation, woe, & bad destinations.” - https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/DN/DN15.html” - Soh, 2019

[26/12/15, 10:29:01 AM] John Tan: A sudden non-dual realisation of the relationship between mind and phenomena. An intense non-dual realisation and experience due to certain koan...is he a zen practitioner?
[26/12/15, 10:32:32 AM] John Tan: There is a difference between no-self of Advaita and no-self of Buddhism. The latter must lead to the realisation of dependent arising.
[26/12/15, 10:33:23 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. He lives in Thailand and talks with monks so I thought he could be Theravada but I'm not sure
[26/12/15, 10:33:31 AM] Soh Wei Yu: So his is like advaita no self?
[26/12/15, 10:37:53 AM] John Tan: Ai Yoh...Not like Advaita...his descriptions of his experiences can only be said to be like a non-dual experience triggered by a realisation of no-self. How it develops will depends on his conditions.
[26/12/15, 10:39:36 AM] John Tan: Like phase 4, my experience is fully non-dual and intense but does not lead to realisation and importance of DO [Dependent Origination].
[26/12/15, 10:39:47 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[26/12/15, 10:40:13 AM] Soh Wei Yu: So his next step is to contemplate on d.o?

[26/12/15, 10:40:57 AM] John Tan: How does he sees DO.
[26/12/15, 10:43:07 AM] John Tan: there are 2, general (non-afflictive) and specific DO (afflictive). Both are enlightened views. Means the mind suddenly stops seeing self and he must drop self/Essence view.
[26/12/15, 10:44:53 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. Should I ask him
[26/12/15, 10:45:20 AM] John Tan: You can ask him how he understands DO.

“Phagguna Sutta: To Phagguna

translated from the Pali by
Nyanaponika Thera

© 2006

Alternate translation: Thanissaro

"There are, O monks, four nutriments for the sustenance of beings born, and for the support of beings seeking birth. What are the four? Edible food, coarse and fine; secondly, sense-impression; thirdly, volitional thought; fourthly, consciousness."
After these words, the venerable Moliya-Phagguna addressed the Exalted One as follows:
"Who, O Lord, consumes[1] the nutriment consciousness?"
"The question is not correct," said the Exalted One. "I do not say that 'he consumes.'[2] If I had said so, then the question 'Who consumes?' would be appropriate. But since I did not speak thus, the correct way to ask the question will be: 'For what is the nutriment consciousness (the condition)?'[3] And to that the correct reply is: 'The nutriment consciousness[4] is a condition for the future arising of a renewed existence;[5] when that has come into being, there is (also) the sixfold sense-base; and conditioned by the sixfold sense-base is sense-impression.'"[6]
"Who, O Lord, has a sense-impression?"
"The question is not correct," said the Exalted One.
"I do not say that 'he has a sense-impression.' Had I said so, then the question 'Who has a sense-impression?' would be appropriate. But since I did not speak thus, the correct way to ask the question will be 'What is the condition of sense-impression?' And to that the correct reply is: 'The sixfold sense-base is a condition of sense-impression, and sense-impression is the condition of feeling.'"
"Who, O Lord, feels?"
"The question is not correct," said the Exalted One. "I do not say that 'he feels.' Had I said so, then the question 'Who feels?' would be appropriate. But since I did not speak thus, the correct way to ask the question will be 'What is the condition of feeling?' And to that the correct reply is: 'sense-impression is the condition of feeling; and feeling is the condition of craving.'"
"Who, O Lord, craves?"
"The question is not correct," said the Exalted One. "I do not say that 'he craves.' Had I said so, then the question 'Who craves?' would be appropriate. But since I did not speak thus, the correct way to ask the question will be 'What is the

condition of craving?' And to that the correct reply is: 'Feeling is the condition of craving, and craving is the condition of clinging.'"

"Who, O Lord, clings?"

"The question is not correct," said the Exalted One, "I do not say that 'he clings.' Had I said so, then the question 'Who clings?' would be appropriate. But since I did not speak thus, the correct way to ask the question will be 'What is the condition of clinging?' And to that the correct reply is: 'Craving is the condition of clinging; and clinging is the condition of the process of becoming.' Such is the origin of this entire mass of suffering.[7]

"Through the complete fading away and cessation of even these six bases of sense-impression, sense-impression ceases;[8] through the cessation of sense-impression, feeling ceases; through the cessation of feeling, craving ceases; through the cessation of craving, clinging ceases; through the cessation of clinging, the process of becoming ceases; through the cessation of the process of becoming, birth ceases; through the cessation of birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of suffering."

Notes

1.

Consumes or eats (*aaharati*) — The commentators say that this monk believed that he understood the three other kinds of nutriment but concerning consciousness he had conceived the notion that there was a "being" (*satta*) that takes consciousness onto himself as nutriment.

2.

Comy: "I do not say that there is any being or person that consumes (or eats)."

3.

Comy: "That means: 'For what (impersonal) state (or thing; *katamassa dhammassa*) is the nutriment consciousness a condition (paccaya)?'" The term dhamma, in the sense of an impersonal factor of existence, is here contrasted with the questioner's assumption of a being or person performing the respective function. By re-formulating the question, the Buddha wanted to point out that there is no reason for assuming that the nutriment consciousness "feeds" or conditions any separate person hovering behind it; but that consciousness constitutes just one link in a chain of processes indicated by the Buddha in the following.

4.

The nutriment consciousness signifies here the rebirth-consciousness.

5.

aayatim punabbhavaabhinibbatti; Comy: "This is the mind-and-body (naama-ruupa) conascent with that very (rebirth) consciousness." This refers to the third link of the dependent origination: "Through (rebirth) consciousness conditioned is mind-and-body" (*viññaa.na-paccayaa naama-ruupam*).

6.

Comy: "The Exalted One said this for giving to the monk an opening for a further question."

7.

Comy: "Why does not the monk continue to ask: 'Who becomes?' Because as one cherishing wrong views, he believes that 'A being has become, has come to be.' Hence he does not question further, because it would conflict with his own

beliefs. And also the Master terminates here the exposition, thinking: 'However much he questions, he will not be satisfied. He is just asking empty questions.'"

8.

Comy: "Here the Master takes up that very point from where he started the exposition: 'Through the sixfold sense (organ) base conditioned is sense-impression,' and here he now turns round the exposition (to the cessation of the cycle of dependent origination).

"In this discourse, there is one link (of cause and fruit) between consciousness and mind-and-body; one link (of fruit and cause) between feeling and craving, and one link (of cause and fruit) between the process of becoming and birth."

Sub-Comy: "Since, in the words of the discourse, 'The nutriment consciousness is a condition for the future arising of a renewed existence,' (consciousness is regarded) as being a condition in a former existence for a future existence, and as being a principal cause (*muula-kaarana*), therefore the Commentary says that 'there is a link (of cause and fruit) between consciousness and mind-and-body.' Hence it should be understood that by the term consciousness, also the 'kamma-forming consciousness' (*abhisa"nkhaara-viññaa.na*) is implied" (i.e., apart from being resultant rebirth consciousness). See also: SN 12.11; SN 12.12; SN 12.17; SN 12.35; SN 12.31; SN 12.63; SN 12.64; AN 10.27; *The Four Nutriments of Life* by Nyanaponika Thera.” - https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/sn/sn12/sn12.012.nypo.html

“John TanMonday, May 12, 2014 at 6:06pm UTC+08

You are escaping into non-arising and emptiness of "no neck and no pain", trapped in the view of non-conceptual clarity also. What is the purpose of seeing the emptiness of "pain"? To ignore and rest in non-conceptual clarity? "Pain" does not arise?

...

John TanMonday, May 12, 2014 at 6:11pm UTC+08

Buddha is telling you how to release suffering, free from birth by right understanding. Not telling you to be confused and not know what to do. He sees DO and know what causes re-birth and taught DO, anatta to free us from sufferings. The purpose of telling you there is no pain in the neck so that you don't apply wrong medicine to the pain! It is not in the neck for example. So you are not trapped! Don't keep thinking it is just the neck get it? So that you can "see" clearly the causes and conditions of this empty "pain" in the neck. Otherwise you are not curing the "pain in the neck" because there is no so called inherent "pain" in the neck... You keep pressing and poking the neck cause more problems...lol. Wrong way, wrong understanding, wrong medicine! Get it? Like a person suffered from slipped disc and the big toe always feel numb and pain, the "pain in the toe" is empty, this is not to say there is "no pain", but to tell you DO...so you can correctly see and realize the exact causes and conditions and understand that it is from the disc protrusion that touches the spinal cord. So you can "cure" it ...

Soh Wei YuMonday, May 12, 2014 at 6:30pm UTC+08

ic.. so its like seeing four nobles truths.. suffering, cause, cessation and path

John TanMonday, May 12, 2014 at 6:30pm UTC+08

Yes. Every sensation, experience, mental object, event...whatever appears to arise is so. Now if I go to the doctor and he gives me muscle relaxant and it cures for a while and come back again...what is it telling me?

Soh Wei YuMonday, May 12, 2014 at 6:44pm UTC+08

the root cause is not removed?

John TanMonday, May 12, 2014 at 6:45pm UTC+08

Yes...assuming you learn by trail and error...by experimentation ... You start pressing the neck and press until it swollen...lol...it is not working. Then you go to the doctor it gives you muscle relaxant, it cures and comes back and you visit a Chinese doctor, it gives you medicine that you purge the "heaty" stuff...and it cures and then it comes back again... You begin to know more and more of the dependencies... Until you are able to link and see the stress that associates with the "pain"...the mental factors... When that attachment to projects, the success and failure, the mental attitude of total acceptance and release...and the pain is gone... You begin to understand deeper... The projects, the mental attitudes, the stress, the medicine, the energy imbalances...how they exert into this arising. Then the mental attitude of acceptance of the pain of the raw sensations and the mental attitude of full acceptance of success and failure of the projects... And the pain in the neck...all the karmic activities. When I visited my Chinese doctor, I told him about my neck pain...he was telling me not to earn so much of "$$$"...lol. He was not just joking...but he sees "the link" in a very practical sense. Total exertion of DO is not to make us more dumb...lol. From top to bottom, there is no self, just these activities.”

General Principle of Dependent Origination

When there is this, that is.
With the arising of this, that arises.
When this is not, neither is that.
With the cessation of this, that ceases.

~ Buddha (Samyutta Nikaya, II:28, 65, as translated by P. A. Payutto, 1994)

The Buddha applied the principle of dependent origination not only to the afflictive twelve links, but also in other examples such as the transcendent dependent arising that ends suffering. The principle of dependent arising also applies to the arising of the six types of consciousness. This must be seen as so even in the unafflicted state of anatta ‘in the seen just the seen, in the heard just the heard’. Otherwise the seen and heard becomes reified as inherently self-existing, independent from conditions.

“This arising thought and previous thought, are they the same or different? This arising thought and previous thought, are they dependent or completely independent? Beyond the extremes, see the middle path of dependent origination.” - John Tan, 2012

Furthermore, in practice, contemplation of the general principle of dependent arising in any given mundane activity is important for the experiential insight into Maha Total Exertion (see below). Although the afflictive chain of dependent origination is the predominant experience of someone prior to realization of anatta, the general principle of dependent origination is even more relevant for post-anatta experience especially when anatta is thoroughly stabilized and self/Self dissolved, as all experiences are pure, clean, luminous, centerless, agentless, traceless. Yet, the pure experience of anatta is seen as the functioning of seamless interdependencies which leads to the taste of Maha Total Exertion. Furthermore, the foreground presencing/aggregates must be realized to be empty and non-arising through dependent origination and dependent designation.

“John Tan: Do you feel being caused or effected? It is just a single flow. Now when we see one, the 10000 things arise
Soh Wei Yu: Yes single flow..
John Tan: This is the right way of seeing... not ignorance. This is the general principle of DO” - Conversation with John Tan, 2013

“In order to understand phase 7 you need to understand phase 6. For those that have not dissolved the background, reversing the afflictive chain is important. For those that have, it is the general Dependent Origination that is important. Conventional it is dependent on causes and conditions but at the ultimate level it is just spontaneous presence. Tsongkhapa’s Prasangika [Madhyamaka] refines a lot of my view.” - John Tan, 2019

"If asked what I am most drawn to (in Tsongkhapa's teachings), I am most drawn to Prasangika's "mere imputation". The quintessence of "mere imputation" is IMO the essence of Buddhism. It is the whole of 2 truths; the whole of 2 folds. How the masters present and how it is being taught is entirely another matter. It is because in non-conceptuality, the whole of the structure of "mere imputation" is totally exerted into an instantaneous appearance that we are unable to see the truth of it. In conceptuality, it is expanded and realized to be in that structure. A structure that awakens us the living truth of emptiness and dependent arising that is difficult to see in dimensionless appearance."

"In ultimate (empty dimensionless appearance), there is no trace of causes and conditions, just a single sphere of suchness. In relative, there is dependent arising. Therefore distinct in relative when expressed conventionally but seamlessly non-dual in ultimate."

"When suchness is expressed relatively, it is dependent arising. Dependent designation in addition to causal dependency is to bring out a deeper aspect when one sees thoroughly that if phenomena is profoundly without essence then it is always only dependent designations." - John Tan, 2015

“There are at least 5 phases of total exertion. Each is a deepening.” – John Tan, 2020

“Different Phases of Understanding Dependent Origination Post-Anatta
Different phases of understanding dependent origination:

[12:14 AM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Means the whole appearance is an unfolding of dependent origination, has no referent besides the magical unfolding that is nowhere to be found but vividly spontaneously displayed
[12:14 AM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: Now if I tell you in total exertion, the sound of someone opening the door is like my heart beat...
[12:15 AM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: The Aircon is closer than my skin
[12:16 AM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: So how is this different?
[12:17 AM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: A vivid sponstaneous display before division...
[12:18 AM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: Like color, sensation, sound, odor
[12:21 AM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: Hearer hearing sound

and

Ear, sound and sound consciousness

and

Now if I tell you in total exertion, the sound of someone opening the door is like my heart beat...

Any differences?
[2:18 AM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: in hearer hearing sound, hearer is one thing, hearing is one thing, sound is one thing.. but in total exertion, the ear, sound, sound consciousness, and all the conditions are factors are the hearing
[2:18 AM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: *and factors

[6:19 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: in anatta in hearing there is just sound, the ear, sound, sound consciousness are just delineations of the field of happening.. one can also see and have insight into dependent origination at the anatta level but not exactly like total exertion yet.. right after anatta i wrote my experience is more like spontaneous happening dependent on conditions but without agency or subject-object
[6:19 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: field of happening but without agent*
[6:24 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: so right after anatta, its like there is no hearer, only ear, sound and sound consciousness... the sound consciousness manifests spontaneously when ear meets sound. but there can still be true existence of ear, sound, sound consciousness as truly arising momentary dharmas
[6:24 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: even if there is no subject-object
[6:28 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: So in hearing, there is only sound, no hearer. This deconstructs hearer.

Ear, sound, sound consciousness is post anatta.

But now ear and sound is not deconstructed.
[6:28 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: yeah
[6:31 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: In total exertion, it is not only ear hears, the eyes, ears...whole body hears...ear is no ear, and eyes is no eyes, body is no body and mind is no mind...all are deconstructed into that sound...

(Soh: “Wondrous! Marvelous!
The teachings of the insentient are inconceivable.
If you listen with the ears, you won't understand.
When you hear with the eyes, then you will know.” - Zen Master Dongshan

“When I talk about listening, I don’t mean just listening with the ear. Listening here includes the totality of perception—all senses open and alive, and still much more than that. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind are receptive, open, not controlled. A Zen saying describes it as “hearing with one’s eyes and seeing with one’s ears.” It refers to this wholeness of perception. The wholeness of being!
Another Zen saying demands: “Hear the bell before it rings!” Ah, it doesn’t make any sense rationally, does it? But there is a moment when that bell is ringing before you know it! You may never know it! Your entire being is ringing! There’s no division in that—everything is ringing.”” - Toni Packer, The Wonder of Presence, excerpt from Finding a New Way to Listen

“In ceremony there are forms and there are sounds, there is understanding and there is believing. In liturgy there is only intimacy. Haven't you heard the ancient master's teaching: Seeing forms with the whole body-and-mind, hearing sounds with the whole body-and-mind one understands them intimately. Intimate understanding is not like ordinary understanding. Ordinary understanding is seeing with the eye and hearing with the ear; intimacy is seeing with the ear and hearing with the eye. How do you see with the ear and hear with the eye? Let go of the eye, and the whole body-and-mind are nothing but the eye; let go of the ear, and the whole universe is nothing but the ear.” - Zen Master Dogen, Shobogenzo)
[6:33 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: ic.. yeah
[6:33 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: Now when you look back all the deconstructions, it is just the sound that is heard. Only sound...but it was "hearer hearing sound"
Then
"Ears, sound, sound consciousness"
Then
It is connectedness of everything as this hearing...
[6:34 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: So look into your experience, sees how the parts are divided by names and designations
[6:39 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: Now where does causes and conditions step in? Is there any division and can you

trace any division?
[7:05 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Cause and conditions step in when the parts, conditions and relations and designation step in
[7:05 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Therefore Cause and effect are interdefined
[7:06 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: There is no real division, only dependently designated relations
[7:40 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: So what does it mean that causes and conditions are empty? Also what is the purpose of deconstructing?
[7:55 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: The conventional causes and conditions unfindable and dependent on the whole host of factors and relations.. purpose is to deconstruct the naive notion of real entities like real ears interacting with real sound producing real effects (inherent production).. in effect all relations are experienced as total exertion and empty clarity rather than truly existent causes and effects or what malcolm said as if eye is inherent agent of inherent forms etc
[7:57 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: If you don't use any Buddhist terms, what do you think is the purpose of deconstruction?
[8:08 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: to experience fully free of artificial fragmentation and solidification and holdings
[8:11 PM, 6/16/2020] John Tan: Quite good but not good enough. Solidification and holdings are not necessary. They are means to an end to allow the mind to understand the cause of contrivance. Feel how is post anatta like, how do you feel?
[9:07 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: non division, luminous, gapless, no distance... in the seen merely the seen is experienced as luminous and gapless. also another aspect is spontaneous.. i always talk about spontaneous happening, agentless, doerless, perceiverless.. and also dependent on conditions
[9:07 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: but not total exertion or emptiness yet
[9:08 PM, 6/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: no agent, nondual, luminosity, spontaneous and dependent on conditions”

“Purpose of Deconstruction and Dependent Origination
[2:13 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Actually my experience is always vibrant presencing.. just a matter of degree.. like getting lost in thought also affects, not enough shamatha. There are probably some other obscurations but i dont understand yet
[2:13 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Yes
[2:13 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: No mind is a direct insight for me on anatta
[2:13 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: So what exactly is obscuring is what I am asking you...
[2:13 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: There is no mind and all is mind simultaneously
[2:13 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Now if I asked you do you know what DO is all about?
[2:15 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: If I say A is causally connect to be what is it really talking about? And when I ask A is empty and be is empty and so is the causal connection between them. What does it mean?
[2:15 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Saying theyare empty doesn't mean anything at all. What is the insight and wisdom from deconstructing them.
[2:16 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Further I have been asking you what is the purpose of deconstruction?

[2:16 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: And why is view important is deconstruction is everything.
[2:16 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Therefore when you answer andre, your points aren't clear.
[2:17 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Having insight of anatta is one thing, having insight of DO is another.
[2:18 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Having deconstruction doesn't mean DO. Advaita practitioner deconstruct self, but why they did not see DO? That is the question.
[2:19 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Now, in Tibetan practice, conceptualization is as if the root of all evils but is it? you have to have your own insights and experiences to authenticate the truth of it.
[2:21 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Why is view important when you need deconstruction? So understand the purpose of deconstruction and understand the view when you have direct insight of anatta to help you.
[2:28 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Advaita subsume everything into one. So their deconstruction leads to collapsing into undifferentiated oneness which has the characteristics of permanence and Self

Whereas buddhism deconstructs Self and sees self and all phenomena like chariot.. so it collapses oneness into multiplicity and then the nature of multiplicity is revealed to be dependent origination and non arising, neither one or many, etc
[2:30 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Subsuming into one, why?
[2:31 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: If deconstruction frees one from conceptualizing, how is it that there's subsuming?
[2:40 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Because after I AM the I AM appears like ultimate reality. So it does not occur to them that the view of subjectivity can be seen through via insight
[2:41 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: They do not even see subjectivity as a view
[2:41 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: To them its the absolute
[2:43 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Therefore this not seeing is the root of ignorance. So don't see mind or not mind doesn't imply insight.
[2:43 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. But for me all observable phenomena are awareness and there is no awareness besides observable phenomena, this is from direct insight
[2:48 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: When one over emphasizes non conceptualization as the ultimate goal, he is letting karmic blind spots sway his understanding.
[2:52 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: So as I have said many times, despite having experiences turned effortlessly non-dual and non conceptual post anatta, I am not into no view. Rather I am into direct authentication of right view.
[2:54 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[2:58 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: This however is not promoting conceptualization over non- conceptual experience. They support each other.
[3:00 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Why do I ask you what is the purpose of deconstruction? You need to know what exactly does deconstruction achieve. You have deconstructed mind, body and divisions...so what is this deconstruction about and what is the purpose?
[3:02 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Experience presence without boundary and artificial separation or fragmentation
[3:08 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Yes. To access directly presence without intermediary. Having direct access does not mean wisdom and insight will arise. But when you are able to to access the state of non-dual presence, you are able to

authenticate the view so that you insight may arise.
[3:09 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[3:12 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: So the view, the experience and the realization.
[3:17 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Now what is dependent origination about? Is it relation between 2 things? If not what is it pointing at?
[3:26 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: It is pointing to the nature of this presencing appearance.. because we do not comprehend the nature of appearance we come up with the idea that things come into existence and abides somewhere for a moment or a while... but when we look into appearance, appearance is none other than the various conditions exerting, like for example the image on screen is dependent on eye, electricity, etc.. you can’t say it has been created and is locatable somewhere. it is none other than a seamless exertion just like chariot is none other than the parts dependencies functions

It is not relation between two things because the depending and depended are not one or two.. the vision is not vision of its own apart from eye.. eye is not eye on its own apart from vision.. it is the nature of this presencing vision to be dependent and non originating
[8:02 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Quite good.
[8:05 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: But DO must been seen and understood from conventional perspective. How it serves as antidote for the conventional fictions of the mind.

[4:05 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: https://youtu.be/BFebcvam2N0
[7:41 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Lol he speaks of the view, experience, realization
[8:01 PM, 6/19/2020] John Tan: Seems like he enjoys the one hand clapping koan. There is no mirror.
[8:02 PM, 6/19/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah..
Labels: Deconstruction, Dependent Origination |”

“The Total Exertion of Success
[12:27 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: As for the deconstruction process via total exertion, a more effective way will be contemplating the ayatanas (Soh: See https://suttacentral.net/mn148/en/bodhi) and consciousness sort of deconstruction..

As I told you the insight trigger from "hearer hearing sound" and "ear, sound, ear-consciousness" are different. Also "ear, sound, ear-consciousness" imo is post anatta into phenomena and action.

[12:28 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. but ear sound ear consciousness is before deconstruction of ear and sound into total exertion right
[12:34 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Post anatta, you are left with sound. When you look at sound from "ear, sound, ear-consciousness" we are led to total exertion.
[12:38 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: But before you talk about total exertion let's look at fluxing...

Buddha named consciousness after its ayatanas. This is to prevent us from abstracting and reifying a pure self standing consciousness. In other words, consciousness is in a perpetual state of fluxing and if you where to slice a moment out of this stream of consciousness-ing, it is always one of the six types of consciousness -- eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness and mental-consciousness.
[12:40 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[12:41 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Now what is that ear-consciousness?
[12:42 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Cannot be spoken besides in relation to ear and sound.. it is just that sound in relation to ear, manifesting that sound consciousness
[12:51 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Yes. If I were to hit a bell with a stick and produce a "tingssss" sound...where and what is that "tingss"?

Is it in the stick, the bell, the air, the vibration of the air, the ear canal, the eardrum?

Also is that "tingss" produced? Is it caused?
[12:53 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: And if you take out a part of the conditions, is there still "tingss" at that moment?
[12:54 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: No
[12:55 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: It is relational but not produced or caused
[1:00 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: The conventional world is populated with discrete separated objects as the mind sees in bits and pieces and languages play a role in enforcing the hoax of separations.

We link these separated objects and say this causes that. We must see through all these symbols and names constructs and cause and effect issues, not just no-self.
[1:08 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: When you say no? are you able to see how and why it is "no"? Like choosing, without all its parts, is it still that choosing?

When you flip a coin, can you flip the head without flipping the tail? When you flip the head, you are at the same time flipping the tail. So can the tail choose not to be flipped?

When we say sensation, sensation is always the sensation of something. Can there be sensation without an object? And we say sensation is not free from that something?
[1:20 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. yeah.. nothing can be found besides those relations. Sensation of heat cannot be found to reside somewhere besides the exertion of hand grasping on the cup and the hot coffee, etc etc.. Therefore unproduced, not inherent production or cause and effect... If produced then it could exist apart from those relations. Choosing also cannot be found besides the relations which volition plays an important role.. volition etc too is dependently originating. It is not determinism which is a kind of fixed view of inherent production, just dependent origination
[1:27 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Choosing is dependent on choosable objects, the subjective mental factors which includes ignorance, afflictions, habits, or conversely wisdom, mindfulness, willpower, external influences, internal

rational reasoning, etc etc.. all those factors exerting in the activity of choosing
[1:27 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: It is not exactly important how words are being replaced but what exactly is "uprooted" from the process of decosntruction. It must lift the veil of "production" and separation, entity and it's characteristics to understand the vivid vibrancy of that "tingss"...

So there can be a direct pointing that enables one to taste without intermediary beyond names and forms of that "tingsss", a non-dual, non-local or total exerted experience, but that does not mean the intellectual blindspot is uprooted.

There can also be clear understanding of intellectually but somehow the blindspot is not lifted and a second pointing into the taste of clarity is needed.
[1:30 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: So direct experience is one thing, clearly seeing through and uprooting of the blindspots is altogether another question.
[1:40 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[1:42 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: When I say soh is very successful, a damn good programmer. So when you look at "success" and see through this label, what did you see?
[1:43 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Just suddenly successful?🤣🤣🤣
[1:43 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: No.. years of gaining experience etc
[1:43 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Tell me more
[1:43 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Everything ...
[1:43 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Go into it...
[1:46 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: It includes learning from teachers, working with others, learning from failures and mistakes, continually refining knowledge and learning, and experience, hmm... actually cannot finish listing all the factors lol..
[1:47 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Yes...that includes coding ten of thousands of lines of codes, many sleepless nights, continual refining ones logic...etc
[1:48 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: All of these all is being exerted into soh as a good programmer here and now...
[1:49 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: So success is designated based on these conditions
[1:55 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: So soh that is here and now and the whole exertion, what is the difference?
[1:59 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: No difference
[2:10 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: No difference how come?
[2:13 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Here and now is just another designation... cannot be found besides the whole exertion of ten directions and three times.. just like consciousness is named and designated after conditions
[2:37 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: Similarly, when you studying an object A, you will soon find that you are not just studying the object itself, you are at the same time studying it's environment, it's conditions...until the line between the thing you study and it's environment and conditions become a blur...until the boundaries and the divisions dissapears ... What can you realize from that?
[2:54 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: To study something is to study the relations and exertion of everything involved

Reminds me of dogen..

To study the Buddha Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be actualized by myriad things. When actualized by myriad things, your body and mind as well as the bodies and minds of others drop away. No trace of enlightenment remains, and this no-trace continues endlessly.
Dogen
[3:14 PM, 6/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Also dependent designations.. everything is dependent designations
[3:43 PM, 6/24/2020] John Tan: The Soh that is here and now and the whole exertion are not two different phenomena. The splitting up creates the impression as if they can be separated. As if you can choose some part and still retain the same successful Soh at the moment. We also create a cause and effect relationship as if Soh that is here and now is a puppet that can't do anything.

Like the head and tail of a coin, they are two aspects of the same coin. The mind that sees the bits and pieces and the language creates an alienated experience and confusions.

All these deconstructions and uprooting of blindspots are to allow the full and total experience of the sound "tingss". Each moment is also the dynamic total participation of the entire situation of the three times.

So in the total exertion of that "tingss", there is no outside, no inside, therefore nothing to cause...no cause, no conditions, no self, no arising, no ceasing. Effortless, boundless, immense, vibrantly alive and free.”

“Alan Watts ~ The Unity Between You And The World
[10:40 PM, 7/2/2020] Soh Wei Yu: https://youtu.be/USyvMGClNdY
[10:40 PM, 7/2/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Nice talk by alan watts on net of indra and total exertion
[10:53 PM, 7/2/2020] John Tan: Yes very good... Like the success
[11:24 PM, 7/2/2020] John Tan: Because we are so used to seeing and understanding from a truly objective world excluding consciousness from the equation or a subsuming consciousness which is just the other end of the pole.

Similarly, we may think that we have to "get out" of conventionalities and be non-conceptual, non-dual, non-local and live in vivid vibrancy prior to separation.

We think that the conventional world and the non-dual, non-conceptual must be mutually exclusive.

What is the sound of one hand clapping in a fully and completely engaged conventional world?

When you move not a single step away from concepts and names, conventions and forms, what is that taste of one hand clapping like? Can you identify it?
[11:28 PM, 7/2/2020] John Tan: But that is not to tell you to keep engaging in conceptual thoughts...lol

[11:44 PM, 7/2/2020] John Tan: Sound makes ear, the ear and the ear makes sound, the sound. No sound, no ear. Neither prior nor after.
This you understand.

But what about Dogen hits a bell, soh hears it? How intimate and how deep have you embraced it?

[11:47 AM, 7/3/2020] John Tan: There are at least 5 phases of total exertion. Each is a deepening.”

“THE WORLD OF INTERRELATEDNESS
Thusness commented, "Yes good stuff. "Things" are just set of relations.

Whatever felt, seen, heard, tasted, smelled and thought that seem so real and awareness that is often taken to be more "real than real" is no different from the "chariot" and its basis of designation."

THE WORLD OF INTERRELATEDNESS
by Adyashanti

“When you feel love or fall in love, that’s a very real feeling to you, and yet you can’t see it, you can’t weigh it; it doesn’t have any objective sort of existence. Nonetheless, we treat it as more real than the things we consider to be real—certainly as more important.”
When we think of interrelatedness, we usually think of big or small things that are in relationship with one another. However, the way I’m using the word is not like that. I’m not denying that, but there is something deeper than that. Things are actually nothing but interrelatedness itself.

It’s really hard for a human mind to think that a thing could be nothing but interrelatedness, that interrelatedness itself ends up to be what things actually are. In this sense, things end up to be no-things, and no-things end up to be all things. So when we hear words like no-thing or nothingness, we shouldn’t try to understand that conventionally. In its truest sense, nothingness doesn’t have much to do with nothing. It has to do with interrelationship or interrelatedness. And so it is with each of us. When you look inside for your true being, you might say, “Okay, exactly, precisely, what is this thing called ‘me’? What actually is it?” The more you look for it, the more you can’t find it. The reason you can’t find it is because it is nothing but interrelatedness. There’s no substance. There’s no thought, idea, or image to grasp. In that sense, it’s empty, but not empty in the sense of being nonexistent. It’s empty in the sense of being unexpected or inconceivable.
When you feel love or fall in love, that’s a very real feeling to you, and yet you can’t see it, you can’t weigh it; it doesn’t have any objective sort of existence. Nonetheless, we treat it as more real than the things we consider to be real—certainly as more important. Most people, if they feel love, their love feels more important to them than the solidity of their toaster. The love has no solidity to it at all. It has no objective tangibility to it, and yet, it’s something that one could orient their whole life around.

The Buddha used to talk about the *thusness* or *suchness* of each moment. It means not just each moment, but the *thusness* or *suchness* of each apparent thing that we perceive. So when I say *being*, this is the sense I'm using it in, a similar way that the Buddha used the *thusness* or *suchness* of something. When we perceive the *thusness* or *suchness* of something, we're actually perceiving it as being nothing but interrelatedness itself. So this ordinary moment, with nothing particularly unusual about it, is being awareness, and awareness itself is interrelatedness. It's not like interrelatedness is aware; it's more like interrelatedness *is.* It's not that the interrelatedness is that which is aware—it's that the interrelatedness *is awareness.*

This is probably the fundamental barrier that any of us will bump into in spirituality: the barrier between awareness and the objects of awareness. The fundamental duality is that there is this world of things, and then there's seeing and experiencing this world of things, and somehow those two are different. One of the great misunderstandings about unity is the belief that it reduces the world to a sort of homogenized "goo" of agreement. Actually, in some ways it's almost the opposite. It frees the uniqueness in you, and it frees you to allow the uniqueness in others. Uniqueness flourishes when we see the unity of things. It doesn't get flattened out—just the opposite. You just stop arguing with the difference that isn't like yours.

When you have two viewpoints that are open to interrelating, almost always something will arise if you stick with it long enough, if you're sincere, if you're openhearted, if you actually want the truth more than you want to win or be right. Eventually something will bubble up from that engagement that's truer than either one began with. If you have two people who are openhearted and see the truth and usefulness, even the utility, of really relating, they'll see that, and both people walk away feeling like "Gosh, I feel good about that, like we both win because we both discovered more than we started with."

The unity of things isn't that there are no differences. It isn't that a tree doesn't look different than the sky, or behave differently than the sky, or have a different kind of life than the sky. The unity is that a tree—an object—is nothing but interrelatedness. The sky is nothing but interrelatedness, and the awareness of things is itself nothing but interrelatedness. That's an explanation that is coming from a way of perceiving. That's what enlightenment really is: seeing that the seeing and what one is aware of are one simultaneous arising. It's an arising that's always flowing because interrelatedness isn't static—it's ever flowing.

That's why I'm always saying that this is really about a kind of vision, not in the sense of having visions, but the quality of our vision, the quality of our perception when we can perceive without the dualistic filter. What seems to be this impenetrable sort of barrier between us and things, us and the world, us and each other, is fundamentally between our consciousness and what consciousness is conscious of. That seemingly basic and immovable sense that there is a fundamental difference, a fundamental separation, is what's really dispelled when our insight gets deep enough.

At the deepest level, the most fundamental level, interrelationship is just that—it's interrelating. It's not *things* interrelating. *Things end up to be themselves interrelatedness.* When vision becomes clear, that's what we perceive. The world becomes not a world of things, but of interrelatedness.

Excerpted from “The World of Interrelatedness,” April 10, 2019 ~ Garrison, NY
Available as an audio download, The World of Interrelatedness. “

“[3/8/19, 1:23:25 PM] John Tan: However the [Adyashanti] article should not lump all into one. They are different insights. "More real than real" is one insight. Everything is in fact truly real is another. The "real" is just "inter-ratedness". Then the clear view of the relationships and how to re-understand and live with the new experience and insights.

[3/8/19, 4:53:14 PM] Soh Wei Yu: More real than real is different from everything is in fact truly real? What do you mean? More real than real is just luminosity right

[3/8/19, 4:54:26 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Btw it occurred to me that advaita talks about non arising but the diff with buddhism is that buddhism non arising is the rejection of inherent production due to being free from causation by self, others, both and causeless, which is to say everything is non arising and free from inherent production due to dependent origination. Whereas in advaita everything is non arising due to everything being mere imputation and projection upon the inherently existing substratum of brahman

[3/8/19, 5:06:41 PM] John Tan: Yes. That (More real than real) is also an insight that turns the mind internal. Non-arising means appearances without essence similar to a reflection, like a rainbow. That (More real than real) comes with I AMness. The difference between anatta and substantiality is beside appearance, there is innate feeling of some essence separate from the appearances of colors, sensations, sound, smell, taste and thoughts. Therefore one cannot be fully open and release.”

Inseparability of Awareness and Conditions

“(12:02 AM) AEN: btw the other day I asked you about what padmasambhava said

‘Since (intrinsic awareness) is self-originated and spontaneously self-perfected without any antecedent causes or conditions,’
then isn't it contradictory to D.O.?
(12:04 AM) Thusness: padmasambhava is not referring to no causes and conditions
(12:05 AM) AEN: oic then what he meant
(12:05 AM) Thusness: he is referring to luminosity is not created. nothing is created. they dependently originates. there is no creation of anything. that is what Buddhists have to understand
(12:07 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:07 AM) Thusness: non buddhists reify a source that is non-created. only the source is not created... in buddhism, there is no origination
(12:08 AM) AEN: icic.. so non buddhist see source and everything originates from source while buddhism doesnt see a source and origination?
(12:09 AM) Thusness: yes. I have already told you awareness has no monopoly” - Conversation with John Tan, 2009

“Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma on the Inseparability of Awareness and Conditions - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/06/bodhidharma-on-awareness-and-conditions.html

The following blog entry is from a post made in my forum on 9th October 2008. It is about seeing awareness as manifestation instead of a mirror reflecting, and seeing the inseparability of awareness and conditions. This is also related to a previous blog entry Dependent Arising of Consciousness which contains a related text by Arya Nagarjuna.

Passerby/Thusness saw some inadequateness in one of the Zen Patriarch Bodhidharma translations, and translated himself a certain passage and commented on my forum:

Original Chinese text from Bodhidharma's Bloodstream Sermon (血脉论): 若智慧明了，此心号名法性，亦名解脱。生死不拘，一切法拘它不得，是名大自在王如来；亦名不思议，亦名圣体，亦名长生不死，亦名大仙。名虽不同，体即是一。圣人种种分别，皆不离自心。心量广大，应用无穷，应眼见色，应耳闻声，应鼻嗅香，应舌知味，乃至施为运动，皆是自心。

(I myself translated certain parts to fill in the gap): With the illumination of wisdom (prajna), mind is known as Dharma Nature, mind is known as Liberation. Neither life nor death can restrain this mind, no dharmas (phenomenon) can. It’s also called the King of Great Freedom Tathagata, the Incomprehensible, the Holy Essence, the Immortality, the Great Immortal. Its names vary but its essence is one. Sages vary, but none are separate from his own mind. The mind’s capacity is limitless, and its conditional functions are inexhaustible. With the condition of eyes, forms are seen, With the condition of ears, sounds are heard, With the condition of nose, smells are smelled, With the condition of tongue, tastes are tasted, every movement or states are all one's Mind.

Comments by Passerby/Thusness:

若智慧明了，此心号名法性，亦名解脱。

A better way to translate this should be:

With the illumination of wisdom (prajna), mind is known as Dharma Nature, mind is known as Liberation.

Comments: It is important to know that mind is itself liberation. That is why knowing the nature of our mind is the way of liberation. If Liberation is not experienced, then the clarity is still not there. There is no true understanding of what mind is.

Liberation is this Pristine Awareness itself in its natural state. That is why understanding this Pristine Awareness is the direct path towards liberation. If we cannot see that the 5 aggregates are themselves our Buddha Nature, then we will not understand there is nothing to shunt from the transience. Thought liberates, sound liberates, tastes liberates. The transience liberates. If we do not see that, then we are taking a gradual path. It is also not advisable to speak too much about spontaneous arising or self liberation. It can be quite misleading.

应眼见色，应耳闻声，应鼻嗅香，应舌知味，乃至施为运动，皆是自心。

A better way to translate should be:

With the condition of the eye, forms are seen, With the condition of ears, sounds are heard, With the condition of nose, smells are smelled, With the condition of tongue, tastes are tasted, every movement or states are all one's Mind.

Thusness/Passerby's comments:

Here there are 2 important points to take note. First is that Buddha Nature is the transience. Second it is more of '应'. Means with the condition of the eye, forms arise. With ears, sound arises.

Awareness is not like a mirror reflecting but rather a manifestation. Luminosity is an arising luminous manifestation rather than a mirror reflecting. The center here is being replaced with Dependent Origination, the experience however is non-dual.

One must learn how to see Appearances as Awareness and all others as conditions. Example, sound is awareness. The person, the stick, the bell, hitting, air, ears...are conditions. One should learn to see in this way. All problems arise because we cannot experience Awareness this way.

Conventionally we experience in the form of subject and object interaction taking place in a space-time continuum. This is just an assumption. Experientially it is not so. One should learn to experience awareness as the manifestation. There is no subject, there is only and always manifestation, all else are conditions of arising. All these are just provisional explanations for one to understand.

Further comments:

What's seen is Awareness. What's heard is Awareness. All experiences are non-dual in nature. However this non-dual luminosity cannot be understood apart from the ‘causes and conditions’ of arising. Therefore do not see ‘yin’ as Awareness interacting with external conditions. If you see it as so, then it still falls in the category of mirror-reflecting.

Rather see it as an instantaneous manifestation where nothing is excluded. As if the universe is giving its very best for this moment to arise. A moment is complete and non-dual. Vividly manifest and thoroughly gone leaving no traces.

Other comments:

Phrase like “everything arises from Emptiness and subsides back to Emptiness” is equally misleading. By doing so, we have made ‘Emptiness’ into a metaphysical essence; similarly not to make the same mistake for “causes and conditions”, not to objectify it into a metaphysical essence. All are provisional terms to point to our insubstantial, essence-less and interdependent nature.”

Writings by Dzogchen teacher Arcaya Malcolm,

“Malcolm wrote:
Yes, I understand. All awarenesses are conditioned. There is no such thing as a universal undifferentiated ultimate awareness in Buddhadharma. Even the omniscience of a Buddha arises from a cause.

PadmaVonSamba wrote:
isn't this cause, too, an object of awareness? Isn't there awareness of this cause? If awareness of this cause is awareness itself, then isn't this awareness of awareness? What causes awareness of awareness, if not awareness?

If awareness is the cause of awareness, isn't it its own cause?

Malcolm wrote:
Omniscience is the content of a mind freed of afflictions. Even the continuum of a Buddha has a relative ground, i.e. a the rosary or string of moments of clarity is beginingless.

Origination from self is axiomatically negated in Buddhadharma,

Each moment in the continuum of a knowing clarity is neither the same as nor different than the previous moment. Hence the cause of a given instant of a knowing clarity cannot be construed to be itself nor can it be construed to be other than itself. This is the only version of causation which, in the final analysis, Buddhadharma can admit to on a relative level. It is the logical consequence of the Buddha's insight, "When this exists, that exists, with the arising of that, this arose."

PadmaVonSamba wrote:
I am not referring to cognition, rather, the causes of that cognition.

Malcolm wrote:
Cognitions arise based on previous cognitions. That's all.

If you suggest anything other than this, you wind up in Hindu La la land.

Malcolm wrote:
There is no such thing as a universal undifferentiated ultimate awareness in Buddhadharma.” - Take from a well written article https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2014/02/clarifications-on-dharmakaya-and-basis_16.html Clarifications on Dharmakaya and Basis by Loppön Namdrol/Malcolm

2008:

(3:53 PM) AEN: hmm ya joan tollifson said: This open being is not something to be practiced methodically. Toni points out that it takes no effort to hear the sounds in the room; it's all here. There's no "me" (and no problem) until thought comes in and says: "Am I doing it right? Is this 'awareness?' Am I enlightened?"; Suddenly the spaciousness is gone?the mind is occupied with a story and the emotions it generates.
(3:53 PM) Thusness: yes mindfulness will eventually become natural and effortless when true insight arise and the whole purpose of mindfulness as a practice becomes clear.
(3:53 PM) AEN: oic
(3:54 PM) Thusness: yes.
(3:54 PM) Thusness: That will only happen when the propensity of 'I' is there.
(3:55 PM) Thusness: When our Emptiness nature is there, that sort of thought will not arise.
(3:55 PM) AEN: toni packer: ... Meditation that is free and effortless, without goal, without expectation, is an expression of Pure Being that has nowhere to go, nothing to get.

There is no need for awareness to turn anywhere. It's here! Everything is here in awareness! When there is a waking up from fantasy, there is no one who does it. Awareness and the sound of a plane are here with no one in the middle trying to "do" them or bring them together. They are here together! The only thing that keeps things (and people) apart is the "me"-circuit with its separative thinking. When that is quiet, divisions do not exist.
(3:55 PM) AEN: icic
(3:55 PM) Thusness: but it will even after the insight arise before stabilization.
(3:55 PM) AEN: oic
(3:56 PM) Thusness: There is no Awareness and Sound.
(3:56 PM) Thusness: Awareness is that Sound. It is because we have certain definition of Awareness that the mind cannot sync Awareness and Sound together.
(3:56 PM) AEN: icic..
(3:57 PM) Thusness: When this inherent view is gone, it becomes very clear that Appearance is Awareness, everything is nakedly exposed and unreservedly experienced effortlessly.
(3:57 PM) AEN: oic..
(3:58 PM) Thusness: a person hit a bell, no sound is being produced. Mere conditions. :P

(3:58 PM) Thusness: Tong, that is awareness.
(3:58 PM) AEN: icic..
(3:59 PM) AEN: wat you mean by no sound is being produced
(3:59 PM) Thusness: you go experience and think lah
(3:59 PM) Thusness: no point explaining.
(3:59 PM) AEN: no locality rite, its not produced from something
(4:00 PM) Thusness: no
(4:00 PM) Thusness: hitting, bell, person, ears, whatever whatever are summed as 'conditions'
(4:00 PM) Thusness: necessary for 'sound' to arise.
(4:00 PM) AEN: icic..
(4:01 PM) AEN: oh the sound is not externally existing
(4:01 PM) AEN: but just an arising of condition
(4:01 PM) Thusness: nor internally existing
(4:01 PM) AEN: icic
(4:02 PM) Thusness: then the mind think, 'I' hear.
(4:02 PM) Thusness: or the mind think I am an independent soul.
(4:02 PM) Thusness: Without me there is no 'sound'
(4:02 PM) Thusness: but i am not the 'sound'
(4:02 PM) Thusness: and the ground reality, the base for all things to arise.
(4:03 PM) Thusness: this is only half true.
(4:03 PM) Thusness: a deeper realisation is there is no separation. We treat 'sound' as external.
(4:03 PM) Thusness: not seeing that as 'conditions'
(4:03 PM) Thusness: there is no sound out there or in here.
(4:04 PM) Thusness: it is our subject/object dichotomy way of seeing/analysing/understanding that makes it so.
(4:04 PM) Thusness: you will have an experience soon. :P
(4:04 PM) AEN: oic
(4:04 PM) AEN: wat you mean
(4:04 PM) Thusness: go meditate.

Afflictive Dependent Origination and the Death-Free (Not “The Deathless”)

The insight into the afflictive process of dependent origination is important:

"There never was a self. One must re-orientate oneself that it is functionality and action that give rise to [the sense of a] self/entity rather than [a real] agent giving rise to action. Therefore from anatta, we see Dependent Origination, cause and conditions, action, karma... unlike [the misunderstanding of] no-self therefore no dependent origination and causality. The former is non-substantialist view, the latter is using substantialist self view to understand anatta (no-self)." - John Tan, 2015

“Karmic propensities are habitual tendencies of perception and behavior which are predicated upon ignorance [avidyā].

The three poisons are a succinct example of this: (i) ignorance [skt. avidyā/moha], (ii) acceptance [skt. rāga], (iii) rejection [skt. dvesa].

Acceptance and rejection are the karmic tendencies which are based on the initial ignorance. One is ignorant of the fact that phenomena ultimately lack any essence or substantiality and therefore appearances are mistaken to be existent objects. Attachment/acceptance of those apparent objects and or aversion/rejection of those alleged objects creates the illusion of a subjective entity which is doing the accepting and/or rejecting.

So the action [karma] itself gives rise to the delusion of an autonomous entity and that delusion is further engrained and fortified through continual action/activity in the same vein.

This process is the foundation and sustenance of samsara. The cause is the ignorance And the conditions are the proliferation of karmic tendencies, e.g. accepting and rejecting.” – Kyle Dixon, 2015

"...prior to anatta and emptiness realizations the perception of an external dimension populated with objects and entities that possess characteristics and perform functions as instruments or agents is an unerring fact of experience. As is the apparent internal point of reference. These structures are simply in place, at all times.

Only after anatta and emptiness is this directly discovered to be false." - Kyle Dixon, 2019

"That phenomena appear to be real is not an advanced philosophical view. It is just a fact of life for people.

People experience objects, persons, places, things as established entities and so on.

They form attachment to persons, places and things. They form aversion to other persons, places and things. Attachment to experiences, aversion to experiences.

For common people this is all based on a cognition of real persons, places and things.

Things that appear unreal to people, again such as dream appearances, mirages, reflections, hallucinations, echoes, are not a basis for attachment and aversion because they are known to be insubstantial appearances." - Kyle Dixon, 2019

“This sort of gets into the whole "cause and condition" side of this equation, where the perception of real entities (persons, places, things, etc.) is caused by a certain type of ignorance. And that being the case, the very cognition of real entities (or what is called "conditioned phenomena" such as an internal, personal self, or external, impersonal objects) quite literally arises because of that ignorance and is therefore fundamentally no different than that ignorance. And in

this sense, when one realizes that said apparently real entities are actually empty of inherency, that realization or epiphany is really just a cessation of cause [ignorance] for the arising of the perception of those entities. Meaning; it is simply a cessation of ignorance.

In that way there is either the presence of ignorance, and the results of ignorance, or the cessation of ignorance and the results of that cessation, but an underlying, substantial nature (like we would find in Vedanta) is not part of that process.” - Kyle Dixon, Dzogchen vs Advaita, Conventional and Ultimate Truth

“I'm not sure about the 'everything arising from rigpa' but Tsoknyi Rinpoche's comments regarding rigpa *(Soh: Rigpa means ‘knowledge’ or vidya, particularly of the true nature of mind/phenomena)* completely pervading all things, and by understanding rigpa you understand all phenomena... are pointing to the fact that once recognition of one's nature has occurred, the delusion that apperceives phenomena as objectively arising qualities of experience which appear to a mind, is overcome.

So that is to say, the recognition of rigpa is essentially the very first time one's experience is known accurately, and that knowledge is then the foundation for one's practice in dzogchen. It's not only the refutation that appearances are the samsaric dualistic mind, but the very idea that appearances and phenomena are subsumed into the mind or consciousness. It's the notion that the objective phenomena are non-dual with a subjective mind or consciousness, and that there is a union of those polarities.

The Dzogchen view is that both the mind/consciousness and the objective appearances are byproducts of delusion, just as Longchenpa says in the quote above; "Likewise, various kinds of phenomena are appearing in the deluded mind because of the interdependent origination of the causes and conditions of delusion." The mind/consciousness and phenomena viewed as objective, separate or subsumed within that mind are both products of delusion, grasping and clinging, imputation and conceptualization etc. The moment a mind or consciousness is posited, that which is not-that-mind arises, that is the dependent origination.

The idea is to see that the mind/consciousness and the phenomena are dependently originated and therefore both are rendered empty if that is ascertained successfully. Also, nothing truly arises from the basis (gzhi), the basis simply displays it's appearance as the five lights, but since that spontaneously and naturally formed display (lhun grub) is primordially pure (ka dag) it's not established (nor unestablished) in any way. Only when that display isn't recognized to be self-display, does phenomena arise.

The basis is never involved in delusion in any way nor does it display delusion, delusion arises due to non-recognition. The recognition of rigpa is simply the knowledge or discernment which results from ascertaining the display of the basis to be self-display. The Mahamudra instructions which say 'everything is mind' is usually a line of reasoning which runs like so: 'everything is mind, mind is empty' so it's a way of helping the aspirant to achieve recognition (if recognition didn't occur in direct introduction).

Everything is the mind deems everything as nondual with the mind, and then the mind is empty i.e. insubstantial, unfindable, unestablished. It's just a way to say that which you perceive as 'objective phenomena' is truly neither the same nor different than the mind, both are imputed designations. Since dzogchen is resting in rigpa, the nature of the mind has already been recognized and so its emptiness is implicit in the view to begin with.” - Kyle Dixon, 2013

“...penetrate deeply into the following aspects:

1. The amazing power of the spell of an arising thought

Clearly understand the power and implications of this arising thought. It is the mystery of all mysteries. When this arising thought sees dualistically and inherent, everything appears infinitely separated and apart. That is all that matters.

2. Look deeply into the cause of suffering as a result of dualistic and inherent thought rather than thought self liberates, penetrate the ‘cause and conditions’ of suffering.

When an arising thought see dualistically, how the entire experience is shaped.

When an arising thought sees inherently, how the entire experience has changed.

With this as the cause, what happens, with the absence of that, what happens.

3. There is no willing off of dualistic and inherent thought, that would be self-view. If there is no doership, is overcoming possible?

From this understanding, an arising thought is not just an arising thought, but the total exertion and entire chain of conditionality is in action. Clearly understand the difference between self-view and principle of conditionality with direct experience. The overcoming is not by way of self-view approach but by understanding the principle of conditionality.” - John Tan, 2012

“Total Exertion of Karmic Tendencies

Karmic propensity is the whole of one's experiential reality. If one feels like a changeless witness, that experience of feeling like a changeless witness IS that propensity in action, in experience... if one is seeing fully that there's only transience (the radiant flow of sights/sounds/smells/taste/touch/thoughts), that is the actualization of wisdom (of anatta).

If one sees manifestation but appears solid, that's also the view of latent tendency, that view of inherent existence in action. That very feeling of concreteness IS karmic tendency. If one sees this very presence (of any experience - sight,

sound, smell, etc) is empty of any it-ness, concreteness, solidity, apparent yet empty, that very vision itself is the actualization of wisdom, it is the total exertion of wisdom, it IS wisdom. Or as Dzogchen puts it - those very five elements (space, wind, fire, water, earth) are wisdoms by nature, so experienced in its actual state, is that actualization of wisdom.

In a way, the view is the experience... every samsaric experience is the total exertion of ignorance along with the 12 links in a single moment. Occasionally ignorant view is forgotten in a peak experience, such a cessation is however non-analytical and merely a passing state, as the conditions for the re-emergence of ignorance and afflictions have not been cut off from its roots. Only the analytical cessation resulting from penetrative prajna wisdom of twofold emptiness can lead to a permanent and quantum shift of perception away from ignorance, what Lankavatara Sutra calls the "turning-about" in the deepest seat of consciousness (but again this deepest seat is not somewhere else but fully manifesting!).

So the karmic tendency, and wisdom, you've been searching for has never been elsewhere but is staring right in your face as your experiential reality all along! Funny how one doesn't see that. That very activity that is mentally fabricated but appearing real as one's only experiential reality at that given moment, just that is the spell of karmic tendency. That activity that is (experienced/seen as) luminous and empty as one's only experiential reality at that given moment is the wisdom.

I remember when Ciaran (of Ruthless Truth) saw the real fiction of self (a process of creative imagination brought into real life, a real creation based on an imaginary character) he wrote that it was a "zen on drugs" moment. Yeah, I can see why he said that!

John commented, "Very good, so the dreams in dreams (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com.au/2012/06/buddha-dharma-dream-in-dream.html). Otherwise you are seeing clarity as empty and tendencies as inherent... hiding somewhere.” - Soh, 2013

From a 2007 article that Soh wrote as a rehash of what John Tan wrote:

“The Spell of Karmic Propensities
The following article is a summary (by me) of some of the conversations Thusness had with me on the topic of Karmic Propensities/Karmic Momentum/Deep Conditionings and how it blinds us and completely affects the way we see phenomena.

Karmic Propensities is what blinded us from seeing the ultimate reality. Our entire mind is affected by karmic propensities such that our entire system of enquiry, even when we want to inquire on reality, we cannot know beyond "Who", "When", "What", "Where". Our mind is always thinking dualistically, in terms of subject and object (an I and a Not-I/an Observer apart from the Object of Observation, which cannot be found in reality). It is a momentum that cannot be located, yet it can be directly felt and experienced, and the momentum arises every moment and affect the entire way we see things. When we are affected by momentum the mind cannot know the ultimate reality (Emptiness).

Because our momentum is at work, we will always assume a subject-object duality. That is, there is a Self, an Agent, and observer, doer, thinker of thoughts. A self that persists in time in a connected way... experiencing things... It blinds us into seeing self and objective world as 'entities', as 'things' with inherent existence, as a separate and permanent 'me'.

So when momentum is in action, we cannot help but react with our karmic patterns. If we were to ask, "If you lost your shoe, are you still you?" or "If you lost your hands, do you still exist?". It almost seems certain to say "Yes, of course I am still I." because we always assumed there is a truly existing "Self" experiencing changes. This momentum can continue even after experiences of transcendental Presence, and distorting the experience.

Dharma Dan calls the karmic propensities of seeing subject/object division, or a separate Agent that is the observer, the "fundamental knot of perception". (See: The Non-Duality Models of Enlightenment by Dharma Dan)

Because it is our habit energy that made us think that way, we are so used to thinking in terms of subject-object duality that it has become so deeply part of us, deeply imprinted into our consciousness.
Apart from understanding our non-dual nature, what is important is the question of why is there a separation in the first place. Why is it that practitioners of all ages see thoughts, sensation, transience, the impermanence as not our Buddha Nature itself? Even when told non-duality, explained and experienced, how is it that it is not known? Understanding the power that blinds is equally important.
As my friend Longchen said, it's the working of the imprints and subtle recalling that makes us sink back to the illusion of a permanent background Source, Witness, Self... separating into form and formless, impermanence and permanence, and thus fail to see that the Appearance is the Source.

> http://www.dreamdatum.com/no-eternalwitness.html
> ...From deep meditative observation, the witness is realised to be **just an impression that is caused by subtle knowingness and sequential observation**. Moment to moment arises in lightning fast speed. The second moment got a subtle imprint of the recently preceded one. This sequential change causes the sense of Subtle Witnessing known as the Eternal Witness...

If we were to eliminate this bond, then we can begin to realise, there is no "Self". In reality, there is only Self1, Self2, Self3 (which are not self), moment to moment our mental and karmic factors arise spontaneously but not in a connected way. We are not a permanent self, life is just a vivid, alive, yet momentary and insubstantial stream of mental and physical phenomena and nothing stays, everything is ever flowing. (Also see What is Self? and What Is The "Me"?)

Without seeing things as 'entities', we can begin to realise the nature of Dependent Co-Arising, Conditionality, Interdependence, etc, i.e Emptiness. The nature is always so, but our karmic propensities obscure us from seeing the truth, distorting the way we see things, enquire things, and perceive things. It is this bond that bonds us life after life in Samsara.

To eliminate the bond we have to feel it, feel the power of the bond, experience it. To eliminate the bond is a matter of insights, the insight into our true nature, the insight into self-liberation, etc. Not only must we eliminate the bond, we must be able to see how "Propensities" blinds us, and that is through naked awareness.

How can naked awareness lead to the insight of our "Propensities"?
Space, time, life, death, in and out are all ‘deeply held’ impressions. We are seldom aware of the “deeply held” until we are able to rest adequately in naked awareness. The nakedness creates the big contrast that provides us the condition for the arising of the insight of the 'deeply held'. The insight into the full power of our ‘propensities’ and resting in naked awareness are both equally crucial in our understanding of our non-dual (no subject-object duality, no separate permanently existing self) and empty (interdependently originated) nature.
To consciousness 'propensities' (deep conditioning or imprints) are all that matters. It is the only 'force' that blinds, bonds and prevents a liberating experience. Once formed it remains latent and only surface when conditions are riped for fruition. We are unable to get rid of it by will. Therefore to know consciousness, it is also to know the impact of deep conditioning, how it is formed and how it subsides. There is really no 'why', it is just how consciousness works.

If we drop our body, we experience astral body.
If we drop our thoughts, we experience “I AM”.
If we drop ‘I’, we experience non-duality.

Every major dropping results in a totally new experiential reality. Perhaps that is why Lao Tze teaches us to eliminate until none to experience Tao.
To drop the bondage/deep conditionings, the mind MUST realise that another way of 'knowing' is possible; an effortless, total sensing and experience of wholeness. Next the experiences of the joy, bliss and clarity of wholeness. Without the insight into the possiblity and the experience of the positive factors, the mind will not release itself from holding.

Even open pure and innocent inquiry is a deep conditioning. Makes the mind chatters incessantly. Every what, when, where and why by itself is a distancing from start. Freeing itself from such mode of inquiry aka 'knowing', the mind rests. The joy of this resting must be experienced for the 'willingness' to arise.

P.S. there are different types of meditative bliss/joy/rapture.
Like samatha meditation, each jhana state represents a stage of bliss associated with certain level of concentration; the bliss experienced from insight into our nature differs.

The happiness and pleasure experience by a dualistic mind is different from that experienced by a practitioner. “I AMness” is a higher form of happiness as compared to a dualistic mind that continuously chatters. It is a level of bliss associated with a state of ‘transcendence’ – a state of bliss resulting from the experience of “formlessness, odorless, colorless, attributeless and thoughtlessness’.

No-self or non-dual is higher form of bliss resulted from the direct experience of Oneness and no-separation. It is related to the dropping of the ‘I’. When non-dual is free from perceptions, that bliss is a form transcendence-oneness. It is what Thusness called the transparency of non-duality.”

“Also, the afflictive chain is released by the pacification of mental proliferation but not through dry non-conceptuality. Like what you said can be by:

- Direct insight of anatta into empty clarity.
- Total exertion.
    - However in total exertion, doing away with self is not necessary. It is fully embraced and fully authenticated by 10 thousand things. Most of your articles seem quite persistent in trying to get rid of “self” even when expressing total exertion. In total exertion, emptiness and endless dependencies of dharma (including self) are a given otherwise total exertion is not possible. Every dharma is purified by its own endless dependencies.
- Persistently seeing of whatever arises dependently is free from extremes will eventually free the mind. Consistently seeing neither self nor no-self, neither arise nor not-arise, breaks the chain of mental proliferation.” - John Tan

“John Tan wrote:

Can't understand him. This aside, recently he posted some extracts about selflessness written by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso:

"When we realize the selflessness of the individual, however, this whole process stops. The wrong views that have their root in the belief in self cease, then the mental afflictions cease, then karmic actions cease, and as a result of that, birth in samsara’s cycle of existence ceases."

"We can formulate the following logical reasoning: Karmic actions and results are mere appearances devoid of true existence, because no self, no actor, exists to perform them. This is a valid way to put things because if the self of the individual does not exist, there cannot be any action, and therefore there cannot be any result of any action either."

Would like to hear your view Kyle, that because there is no-self, there is no action.

Frankly this is not inline with the experience and insight of anatta I have. I seriously cannot accept Mr. J's "because there is no self, there is nothing to do". I resonate more with Buddhaghosa's 'Suffering as such exists, but no sufferer is found; The deeds are, but no doer is found.'

Kyle Dixon replied:

I was thinking about these comments from KTG just the other day because I saw Mr. J post them, they do seem off.

The only guess I have regarding the first quote is that he is referring to the complete realization of selflessness, not a mere recognition. It would not be right to think all of those processes cease upon initial recognition, but that is of course how Mr. J misinterpreted the excerpt. I don't have the text, but I can imagine there is more context that is missing.

As for the other quote, it isn't the best way to communicate the message in my opinion.

My view is that the self is imputed onto the action or afflicted activity. And the activity is the result of ignorance. First there is ignorance regarding the nature of appearance, and appearances are mistaken to be external, whereas mind is then internal. From there further grasping occurs which fortifies this split, and the alleged inner reference point is then treated as mine and myself, which leads to I-making in the form of imputation. That activity of imputation then further deepens the fallacious structure of self and other because activity unfolds based on the misconception of the self.

But the self is not the lynchpin. Ignorance is. Is the self and ignorance synonymous? I don't think so. Because ignorance is two fold in that it reifies the apparent inner dimension and external dimension. The self that karma is related hto is the mind reified as self. We can recognize non-arising related to that substrate knower, and still perceive a substantial external dimension. Likewise we can recognize non-arising of objects in the external dimension and the inner substrate knower remains in tact. Then, we can also recognize the non-arising in different sensory gates at different times. For instance one can recognize the non-arising of sound yet visual perception remains afflicted, and vice versa.

So it isn't as simple as just negating the self and washing our hands of the massive nexus of afflictive processes. It is much more complex than that.

Is it true that the self is unreal and the activity base on the self is unreal? Sure. But KTG is sort of communicating this in a backwards fashion. Just because the self is unreal does not mean it is not constructed and based on a complex nexus of afflictive activity, that is then based in delusion. And that activity is habitual.

This is why Padmasambhava says my view is higher than the sky but my attention to karmic cause and effect is finer than flour.

The karmic cause and effect is the patterns of grasping that reinforces the inner and outer yings or dimensions.

KTG's message is true in a certain context, but is communicated recklessly. And of course the nuance of the issue are completely lost on you-know-who. I feel he has had some coarse insights into substantial non-dual states, maybe. But he has never really seen equipoise. This is my feeling.

The self does not create the fundamental afflictive activity. The fundamental afflictive activity gives rise to the self, and then both spin out of control from there. But one will not resolve the affliction by merely negating the self.

Kyle Dixon replied:

Anatta equipoise is related to absence of time, and in this sense action is indeed negated. Also the threefold actor, action, acted upon is undone when the insight is twofold. Anatta in objects is related to unreality of space. But only Buddhas are in non-retroactive state of that nature.

John Tan replied:

Yes Kyle, like you said it is not so straight forward and logical deduction can be slippery. Does freedom from subject/object duality necessarily frees one from "mine" attachment?

"First there is the ignorance regarding the nature appearance and appearances are mistaken to be external whereas mind is then internal. "

My view is this misapprehension is the result of ignorance but grasping need not arise. That is, I/others, subject/object are not the result of grasping but a non-recognition. However when "mine" arises, that is grasping.

Kyle Dixon replied:

I agree that the feeling of subject-object precedes grasping and "mine."

In some systems there is actually a tiered model of ignorance for this very reason, and that simple non-recognition is treated as a different aspect of ignorance. That bare non-recognizing ignorance is sometimes illustrated in the example of the first instances when waking up from sleep where one is cognizing appearances, and those appearances are externalized, but self-identification has not arisen yet. I've had these moments extend to where I will wake up and it takes a few moments to even register where I am, yet bare cognizance is certainly functioning. Then imputation arises and recollection of person, place, time, plans, schedule etc., all unfold, which is held as a different type of ignorance.”

“I’m obviously preferable to the Dzogchen system because I started there and although branching out, my primary interest has remained there. But I do appreciate the run-down of avidyā or ignorance in the Dzogchen system because it is tiered and accounts for this disparity I am addressing.

There are two or three levels of ignorance which are more like aspects of our delusion regarding the nature of phenomena. The point of interest in that is the separation of what is called “innate” (or “connate”) ignorance, from what is called “imputing ignorance.”

The imputing ignorance is the designating of various entities, dimension of experience and so on. And one’s identity results from that activity.

The connate ignorance is the failure to correctly apprehend the nature of phenomena. The very non-recognition of the way things really are.

This is important because you can have the connate ignorance remain in tact without the presence of the imputing ignorance.

This separation is not even apparent through the stilling of imputation like in śamatha. But it can be made readily apparent in instances where you awaken from sleep, perhaps in a strange location, on vacation etc., or even just awakening from a deep sleep. There can be a period of moments where you do not realize where you are right yet, and then suddenly it all comes back, where you are, what you have planned for the day, where you need to be, etc.,

In those initial moments you are still conscious and perceiving appearances, and there is still an innate experience of the room being external and objects being something over-there, separate from oneself. That is because this fundamental error in recognition of the nature of phenomena is a deep conditioning that creates the artificial bifurcation of inner and outer experiential dimensions, even without the activity of imputation.” - Kyle Dixon, 2019

Lopon Malcolm:

“In the basis (Tibetan: གཞི, Wylie: gzhi) there were neutral awarenesses (sh shes pa lung ma bstan) that did not recognize themselves. (Dzogchen texts actually do not distinguish whether this neutral awareness is one or multiple.) This non-recognition was the innate ignorance. Due to traces of action and affliction from a previous universe, the basis became stirred and the Five Pure Lights shone out. When a neutral awareness recognized the lights as its own display, that was Samantabhadra (immediate liberation without the performance of virtue). Other neutral awarenesses did not recognize the lights as their own display, and thus imputed “other” onto the lights. This imputation of “self” and “other” was the imputing ignorance. This ignorance started sentient beings and samsara (even without non-virtue having been committed). Yet everything is illusory, since the basis never displays as anything other than the five lights.”

Staying near Sāvatthī … “Monks, I will describe & analyze dependent co-arising for you. And what is dependent co-arising?

From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications.
From fabrications as a requisite condition comes consciousness.
From consciousness as a requisite condition comes name-&-form.
From name-&-form as a requisite condition come the six sense media.
From the six sense media as a requisite condition comes contact.
From contact as a requisite condition comes feeling.
From feeling as a requisite condition comes craving.

From craving as a requisite condition comes clinging/sustenance.
From clinging/sustenance as a requisite condition comes becoming.
From becoming as a requisite condition comes birth.
From birth as a requisite condition, then aging-&-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play.
Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering.
“Now which aging-&-death? Whatever aging, decrepitude, brokenness, graying, wrinkling, decline of life-force, weakening of the faculties of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called aging. Whatever deceasing, passing away, breaking up, disappearance, dying, death, completion of time, break up of the aggregates, casting off of the body, interruption in the life faculty of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called death.
“And which birth? Whatever birth, taking birth, descent, coming-to-be, coming-forth, appearance of aggregates, & acquisition of (sense) media of the various beings in this or that group of beings, that is called birth.
“And which becoming? These three becomings: sensual becoming, form becoming, & formless becoming. This is called becoming.
“And which clinging/sustenance? These four are clingings: sensuality-clinging, view-clinging, habit-&-practice-clinging, and doctrine-of-self-clinging. This is called clinging. [Or: These four are sustenances: sensuality-sustenance, view-sustenance, habit-&-practice-sustenance, and doctrine-of-self-sustenance.]
“And which craving? These six are classes of craving: craving for forms, craving for sounds, craving for smells, craving for tastes, craving for tactile sensations, craving for ideas. This is called craving.
“And which feeling? These six are classes of feeling: feeling born from eye-contact, feeling born from ear-contact, feeling born from nose-contact, feeling born from tongue-contact, feeling born from body-contact, feeling born from intellect-contact. This is called feeling.
“And which contact? These six are classes of contact: eye-contact, ear-contact, nose-contact, tongue-contact, body-contact, intellect-contact. This is called contact.
“And which six sense media? These six are sense media: the eye-medium, the ear-medium, the nose-medium, the tongue-medium, the body-medium, the intellect-medium. These are called the six sense media.
“And which name-&-form? Feeling, perception, intention, contact, & attention: This is called name. The four great elements, and the form dependent on the four great elements: This is called form. This name & this form are called name-&-form.
“And which consciousness? These six are classes of consciousness: eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, body-consciousness, intellect-consciousness. This is called consciousness.
“And which fabrications? These three are fabrications: bodily fabrications, verbal fabrications, mental fabrications. These are called fabrications.
“And which ignorance? Not knowing stress, not knowing the origination of stress, not knowing the cessation of stress, not knowing the way of practice leading to the cessation of stress: This is called ignorance.
“Now from the remainderless fading & cessation of that very ignorance comes the cessation of fabrications. From the cessation of fabrications comes the cessation of consciousness. From the cessation of consciousness comes the cessation of name-&-form. From the cessation of name-&-form comes the cessation of the six sense media. From the cessation of the six sense media comes the cessation of contact. From the cessation of contact comes the cessation of feeling. From the cessation of

feeling comes the cessation of craving. From the cessation of craving comes the cessation of clinging/sustenance. From the cessation of clinging/sustenance comes the cessation of becoming. From the cessation of becoming comes the cessation of birth. From the cessation of birth, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair all cease. Such is the cessation of this entire mass of stress & suffering.”

- *Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga Sutta, https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN12_2.html*

Afflictive dependent originated more related to the more commonly known afflictive twelve links of dependent arising as taught by Buddha, as shown above. It is a direct insight into how ignorance and karmic propensities are exerted into our reified samsaric world of solid self, body-mind and universe with its incumbent clinging and sufferings in real time. And as you might know, a central teaching of Buddha in the Pali canon is the four noble truths, pertaining to suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering and the path that ends suffering (ref: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN56_11.html). The afflictive chain of the twelve links of dependent origination can only cease upon the cessation of ignorance via the unfolding of wisdom through development of insight, therefore merely suppressing one’s suffering or even entering a temporary state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi or even Nirodha Samapatti is not going to reverse the chain of afflictive dependent origination. Reversing the chain of twelve links requires analytical cessation, not merely non-analytical cessation (see: two cessations), otherwise the chain of dependent arising driven by ignorance cannot be put to an end.

Afflictive dependent origination/the twelve links pertains to the origin of suffering. Everything perceivable and experience-able are conditionally arisen in dependence on causes and conditions, with the exception of the two cessations (analytical and non-analytical) and unconditioned space*. Nirvana (cessation; specifically analytical cessation) is obviously not conditioned by causes and conditions and hence called *asaṃskṛta (not-conditioned)*, however, according to Madhyamaka even the two cessations (analytical and non-analytical) and unconditioned space are empty and dependent - although not dependent on causes and conditions, they are dependently designated, and hence are empty of inherent existence.

“*There are two kinds of space discussed in Buddhist texts. The first and most important is space as "absence of obstruction." This is uncompounded or unconditioned space. The second kind of space is dimension, such as the dimension of the cavity in a cup. That kind of space is compounded.*

The other two unconditioned dharmas, the two cessations, also lack inherent existence because they are the absence of causes, and do not by themselves exist.” - Lopon Malcolm

In the suttas (scriptures) and traditional Buddhism, there is both the three lifetimes model of the twelve links, where afflictive dependent origination plays out through past (first two links), present (next eight links) and future (last two links) lifetimes, as well as the one-lifetime model where all twelve links are exerted in one life or in each moment of afflicted experience. While this guide focuses on the dependent origination that can be experienced in this very lifetime, it should also be mentioned that the Buddha clearly did have the three lives in mind as evinced when he talked about

gandhabba (rebirth-linking consciousness) descending into the mother’s womb as part of the process of the twelve links (DN 15: Mahā Nidāna Sutta - read this to have a thorough and clear analysis by Buddha on the twelve links of dependent origination), and it is taught that it is the rebirth-linking consciousness which contributes to the birth and development of the fetus’s body (and the goal of his teachings is to put an end to suffering and the uncontrolled cycle of rebirth - the Mahayana Buddhists hold the higher goal of Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings rather than the cessation of arahants of early Buddhism, but that is another topic of discussion) and the rest of the chain of dependent origination, thus the twelve links of dependent origination is not merely psychological in the context of the Buddhadharma (teachings of Buddha). However going into the details of this, along with the topic of rebirth is beyond the scope of this guide. Suffice to say, both the three and one lifetime model of the twelve links of dependent origination are seen to be valid in the teachings of Buddhadharma. The process of rebirth does not require a soul, a self or a Self, but is explained as a causal process of dependent origination - more details in https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/reincarnation-without-soul.html

The doctrine of rebirth is intrinsically tied to the three-lives model of the twelve links of dependent origination. Even if you don’t believe in rebirth or reincarnation, it is doubtless that the Buddha clearly had literal rebirth (i.e. rebirth/afterlife in the literal and not merely metaphorical or psychological sense) in mind when describing the twelve links of dependent origination, plus it is irrefutable that he had discussed about rebirth and his countless past lives in more than numerous occasions. It is important to understand this to see the context in which the twelve links of dependent origination and the so called ‘death-free’ and ‘not-conditioned’ nature of Nirvana is taught, otherwise it will be misunderstood. If you have read the suttas and Pāli Canon, you will see that the Buddha does not hold any sort of view of an Essence and only taught about process and dependent origination, that is to say, suffering, the origin of suffering, the end of suffering and the path that ends suffering. He has never taught about an I, me and mine, or an ultimate source and substratum, in fact he rejected all these views such as in (MN 1 - The Root Sequence, Mūlapariyāya Sutta - read this one if you have not, including the commentary by Ven. Thanissaro at the top of the page). The whole process of birth and death is simply the chain of dependent origination in action and the reversal or cessation of rebirth (becoming, birth and death) is likewise through the cessation of the afflictive chain of dependent origination with the cessation of ignorance, and so on. Death-free simply means the end of birth, ageing, sickness and death, which precisely and merely means the end of rebirth, it does not require or posit some “deathless ground” that remains after cessation. Because most people do not understand essencelessness, they wrongly grasp on the wrong translation of the epithet of nibbana/nirvana (which literally means cessation or extinguishment, a big hint there already) - amata (death-free) and turn it into an apophatic absolute “THE Deathless” and thereby distort Buddhism into a doctrine of their own making that is no different from Advaita Vedanta.

Furthermore, not only did the Buddha recalled his past lives, but so did many of his students, and even today there are many seasoned practitioners and meditators that recalled their past lives, including John Tan, Sim Pern Chong and many others. There are also many interesting researches and findings that validates rebirth, including Dr. Ian Stevenson’s research into the past life memories of children. Whether you treat these findings, experiences and memories as valid and regardless of your belief/lack-thereof in rebirth or reincarnation, it is doubtless that rebirth and ending rebirth in the literal sense is a major theme of Buddha’s teachings, and the secular version of Buddhism devoid of literal rebirth is a rather modern offshoot or development where modern materialists try to sell their version of Buddhism stripped of its

spiritual contents and only go for the tangible benefits of practice to be experienced in this life only. From the perspective of traditional Buddhism, it is as Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith said, “Dharma sets out to solve one existential problem and one only: rebirth in samsara due to afflictions. If you are practicing ethics, meditation, etc. with any view in mind other than ceasing to take rebirth in samsara, you may be engaged in this or that practice, but you are not practicing Dharma. As Mañjuśrī said, "If one has clinging to this life, one is not a Dharma person."”

I am not saying that the secular approach is completely devoid of merits (you can certainly benefit from the practice in various ways even if you do not accept rebirth, although perhaps to a different extent than someone who wholeheartedly accepts, investigates and practices Buddhadharma in its entirety), and it is not the purpose of this guide here to convince you of rebirth (although it certainly helps to be more open minded when it comes to exploring spirituality). But as I mentioned, in order to even understand what the Buddha was teaching in the first place, it is important to understand the context in which the twelve links of dependent origination, as well as the death-free nirvana (cessation) is taught. Why is this so? In the context of one-life dependent origination, ‘death-free’ does not make sense, as even an arahant’s body is subjected to ageing, sickness and death (sometimes in gruesome and unpleasant ways - such as Mogallana’s death), and although a living arahant has ended passion, aggression and delusion, and ended all identifications and the conceit of ‘I Am’ or any traces of self-identity, their five senses remain unimpaired and still experience pleasure and pain*. However, this all makes sense in a three-lifetime model - because there is no more birth in a future life, there is henceforth no more future ageing, sickness and death of a future lifetime, and hence death-free is spoken in that context (absolutely not in the sense of an unchanging metaphysical substrate).

(**'Monks, there are these two forms of the nibbāna property. Which two? The nibbāna property with fuel remaining, and the nibbāna property with no fuel remaining.*
'And what is the nibbāna property with fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant whose effluents have ended, who has attained completion, finished the task, laid down the burden, attained the true goal, destroyed the fetter of becoming, and is released through right gnosis. His five [sense] faculties still remain and, owing to their being intact, he experiences the pleasing & the displeasing, and is sensitive to pleasure & pain. His ending of passion, aversion, & delusion is termed the nibbāna property with fuel remaining.
'And what is the nibbāna property with no fuel remaining? There is the case where a monk is an arahant... released through right gnosis. For him, all that is sensed, being unrelished, will grow cold right here. This is termed the nibbāna property with no fuel remaining.'
— *Iti 44*)

Answering someone’s question on whether the term ‘dukkha’ and the twelve links only relate to mentally fabricated experience in a state of delusion, Soh replied:

"Birth is dukkha, aging is dukkha, death is dukkha; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, & despair are dukkha; association with the unbeloved is dukkha; separation from the loved is dukkha; not getting what is wanted is dukkha. In short, the five clinging-aggregates are dukkha."

— SN 56.11

In the Mahā Puama Sutta (M 109 = S 22.82), we find the Buddha questioned by an unnamed certain monk on this point, and the Buddha answers, thus:
“Bhante, is that clinging the same as the 5 aggregates of clinging, or is it different from the 5 aggregates of clinging?”35
“Bhikshu, that clinging is neither the same as these 5 aggregates of clinging, nor is it different from the 5 aggregates of clinging. It is the desire and lust36 for the 5 aggregates of clinging that is the clinging there.3

Appropriated Aggregates are Suffering

A common misunderstanding is that Buddha taught "life is suffering". As Alan Smith pointed out, there is often an overemphasis on suffering, but actually in Buddhism, there is only suffering when there is appropriation and clinging. To be clear: Buddha has **never** said "life is suffering", however, he did teach right from the beginning in his first discourse on the four noble truths that "appropriated aggregates are suffering", and by appropriated I mean tainted with I-making and mine-making.

In the Pali suttas, clinging and appropriation are not equated with the sheer aggregates (https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/MN/MN44.html), and as Stian mentioned, he thinks aggregates are almost never mentioned in the sense of 'sheer aggregates' in the Pali canon. I think you get glimpses of how are 'sheer aggregates experienced by Buddha/arahants' in scriptures like Bahiya Sutta and Kalaka Sutta. In any case, the appropriation is what causes suffering, and the end of appropriation is the end of suffering.

In Bahiya Sutta (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html), the end of appropriation is equated to the end of suffering, and it is the definition of Nirvana (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/09/great-resource-of-buddha-teachings.html). The first discourse he taught was on the four noble truths and one of his five students attained stream entry then, and the second discourse (https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/the-anatta-lakkhana-sutta.html) he taught was on anatta and all the five monks became arahants.

Now when we come to the Mahayana teachings, all aggregates are taught to be primordially pure and luminous. Does this negate the Pali suttas which says appropriated aggregates are suffering? No, it does not, if understood correctly in context.

Here's some nice clarifications on Dhammawheel:

https://dhammawheel.com/viewtopic.php?t=28932

"

Sobhana wrote:

The Buddha sums up his definition of dukkha with: "aggregates subject to clinging are suffering" (pancupadanakkhandha).

What is the meaning and what are the implications?"

"Since "upadana" means "appropriation",

(see http://www.dhammawheel.com/viewtopic.php?f=23&t=5560)

more accurate translation would be "appropriated aggregates are suffering". This implies that suffering continues as long as the aggregates are appropriated, identified with.

Best wishes!

Post by vinasp » Wed Feb 22, 2017 8:10 am

Hi everyone,

I intend to quote some discourses which speak of the cessation of the clinging aggregates, using the alternative term 'sakkaya.'

One problem with this term is that every translator seems to use a different word for it.

Bhikkhu Bodhi uses 'identity', Ven. Thanissaro uses 'identification'.

However, I first need to show that 'identity' does indeed mean the five aggregates subject to clinging, this is stated in MN 44

"Lady,'identity, identity' is said. What is called identity by the Blessed One?"

"Friend Visakha, these five aggregates affected by clinging are called identity by the Blessed One..."

[Bhikkhu Bodhi, MLDB,- MN 44.2]

When I looked on suttacentral I found that they were not using BB's translation for MN 44, but the one that they are using is very good, it is by Anandajoti Bhikkhu.

“ ‘Embodiment, embodiment,’ is said, Noble Lady. What, Noble Lady, is said to be embodiment by the Gracious One?”

“These five constituents (of mind and body) that provide fuel for attachment, friend Visākha, are said to be embodiment by the Gracious One, as follows:

the form constituent that provides fuel for attachment, the feelings constituent that provides fuel for attachment, the perceptions constituent that provides fuel for attachment, the (mental) processes constituent that provides fuel for attachment, the consciousness constituent that provides fuel for attachment....” [suttacentral.net - MN 44]

Clinging is a mistranslation of 'upadana', fuel or nutriment is much better, I prefer 'sustain' because this sustaining is the cause of 'bhava' (becoming or existence), the continuation of the existence of the apparent self.

“These five constituents (of mind and body) that provide fuel for attachment ..."

Should be understood as: “These five constituents (of mind and body) that provide fuel for becoming (bhava).."

See also SN 12.11 where the 'four nutriments' are said to have craving as their source or origin. This is Dependent Origination with the four nutriments replacing clinging (upadana).

Regards, Vincent.

....

https://dhammawheel.com/viewtopic.php?t=36826

“Yes, upadana-khandha means 'object of clinging' ('aggregate of clinging').
It does not mean a potential object of clinging but it means an object of actual clinging.
Therefore, a lamp is not an upadanakhandha until there is attachment to the lamp as 'my lamp'.
It follows the word compound 'upadanakhandha' can be translated as 'aggregates subject to clinging' or 'aggregates of clinging'.
“

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[11:32 AM, 8/2/2020] John Tan: Tsongkhapa spoke about appropriated aggregates in his lam-rim chen-mo.

[11:32 AM, 8/2/2020] John Tan: Mmk [Mūlamadhyamakakārikā] also

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https://dhammawheel.com/viewtopic.php?f=13&t=29517&p=425812#p425812
Re: The 3 marks of what, exactly?
Unread post by vinasp » Sun May 21, 2017 11:55 am
Hi everyone,
"Bhikkhus, form is impermanent, feeling is impermanent, perception is impermanent, volitional formations are impermanent, consciousness is impermanent....." SN 22.12
“Bhikkhus, form is suffering, feeling is suffering, perception is suffering, volitional formations are suffering, consciousness is suffering....." SN 22.13
“Bhikkhus, form is nonself, feeling is nonself, perception is nonself, volitional formations are nonself, consciousness is nonself....." SN 22.14
These may appear to be talking about the five aggregates, but I think that the five clinging aggregates are meant. All three continue in this way:
"Seeing thus, bhikkhus, the instructed noble disciple experiences revulsion towards form, revulsion towards feeling, revulsion towards perception, revulsion towards volitional formations, revulsion towards consciousness. Experiencing revulsion, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion his mind is liberated. When it is liberated there comes the knowledge: ‘It’s liberated.’ He understands: ‘Destroyed is birth, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has

been done, there is no more for this state of being.’”
Clearly, the aggregates mentioned at the start are those of an unliberated individual.
Another possibility is that 'form is suffering', and the rest, are not meant to be understood as ontological statements, but as how these things should be regarded. This explains 'seeing thus' as what leads to liberation.
Actual form is experienced, but the 'form aggregate' may mean a habit of regarding form in the wrong way, as permanent, a source of pleasure, and in relation to a self. If so, then the form aggregate will vanish when seen in the right way.
It seems that the discourses do not always make an explicit distinction between the aggregates and the clinging aggregates.
Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, while not entirely rejecting the distinction, follows the Abhidhamma and Commentaries, arguing that the Arahant is still described by clinging aggregates.
Perhaps we should assume that almost all teaching on the aggregates is about the five clinging aggregates.
Regards, Vincent.

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A. From MN 44, the ***Culavedalla Sutta, The Shorter Series of Questions and Answers***

   Scene: Householder Visakha has a Q&A with Bukkhuni Dhammadina

   2. “Lady...What is called identity by the Blessed One?”
   “Friend Visakha, the five aggregates affected by clinging are called identity by the Blessed One; that is, the material form aggregate affected by clinging, the feeling aggregate affected by clinging, the perception aggregate affected by clinging, the mental formations aggregate affected by clinging, and the consciousness aggregate affected by clinging.”
   7. “Lady, how does identity view come to be?”
   “Here, friend Visakha, an untaught person regards ...material form as self, or self as possessed of material form.....feeling as self, or self as possessed of feeling.... He regards perceptions as self or as self possessed of perceptions.... mental formations as self, or self as possessed of mental formations.... consciousness as self, or self as possessed of consciousness....”
   8. “Lady, how does identity view not come to be?”
   “Here, friend Visakha, a well-taught noble disciple, who has regard for the noble ones and is skilled and disciplined in their Dhamma....does not regard feeling as self or self as of possessed of feeling.... He does not regard perceptions as self or self as possessed of perception....He does not regard material form as self or self as possessed of material form....he does not regard mental formations as self.....does not regard consciousness as self....”

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Also related:

Fetter

"The eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye. Whatever desire & passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there. The ear is not the fetter of sounds... The nose is not the fetter of aromas... The tongue is not the fetter of flavors... The body is not the fetter of tactile sensations... The intellect is not the fetter of ideas, nor are ideas the fetter of the intellect. Whatever desire & passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there." -- Buddha, SN 35.191 (PTS: S IV 162)

"My son, we are not bound by appearances; we are bound by our clinging to them." - Tilopa to Naropa

"The five senses arising with their objects are unimpeded radiance.
What is born from not grasping at objects is the unborn basic state.
Attachment to appearances may be unceasing but reverse it: meditate naturally settled.
Empty appearances arising free from the intellect is the path of natural expressions.
Do not see appearances as problems, let go of clinging.
There will come a time when you will arrive in the valley of one taste meditation." - Yang Gönpa

Stop Bothering the Sound

Aditya Prasad
utaSn5140hs1ored ·
Eckhart Tolle on manifestation:
https://youtu.be/RptPnLMI-1I
1 Comment

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
This is something a little off topic and unrelated to manifestation:

The peak of the 'completeness of the present moment' and absence of 'feeling of lack' which Eckhart Tolle eludes to, is 'in the seen just the seen', 'in the heard just the heard'.

If the heat is just heat, the heat kills you and the whole universe is the heat. If cold is just cold, the cold kills you, and the whole universe is cold. (See: Where There Is No Cold or Heat) In such a state, you are completely 'killed'. It is as if, and in fact in an experiential sense it is absolutely true, 'you' no longer exist at all. There is no trace of 'you' left anywhere in the universe. It is such a state of equipoise accompanied with prajna wisdom that liberates. And how can

there be incompleteness, imperfection, or feeling of lack in such a state? How can there be mental unease, resistance, or craving in such a state, whether you are sitting on a porch in front of a beach, a mountain, or a slum?

Bitten by mosquitoes is just another sensation - in sensing only sensation, no sensor. Sensations are just sensations, they kill 'you' (and in fact after anatta is realised as always already so and becomes stable natural state then there is no longer even a 'killing you' it's just naturally so as an actualized state). The sensations don't bother you at all, it is more like you bother the sensation, or rather the sense of 'self' is in fact the karmic activity of resisting that sensation. It's like someone can be very annoyed at some sounds, and another person just sits there in a state of zen and equanimity, why? The sounds in and of itself doesn't bother the person, it's the person 'bothering the sound'. The Buddha said, the eyes and forms, body and sensations, and so on, doesn't fetter you, it is the desire [or resistance/aversion/delusion] towards them that constitutes the fetter. Fetter or afflictions is simply 'self-created' chains and bondage, the aggregates are in and of themselves free when seen as they are.

(Update: and when I said self-created I don't mean arising from a truly existing agent as there isn't any, but rather arising due to the nexus of ignorance-driven dependent origination)

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Reply
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Edited

Bodhidharma says, "The usual person, through basic ignorance, fixates on one thing and then another."

This basic ignorance is the root of self-image, avidya, basic ignorance, ignoring the fact that one is already fundamentally free and pretending to be bound. In the midst of space, trying to carve out some territory, as if one could build walls out of the sheer air, as if one could tie knots in the air, nail clouds in place.

This tying of knots, this erecting of walls, this nailing things down, is this fixating on one thing and then another, grasping at thought, grasping at sounds and feelings, grasping at forms, and names. This is called craving.

And so the craving that we need to address in our practice is not just a matter of giving up our attachment to fashion or a beautiful house, a beautiful wife, a beautiful husband, beautiful children, a beautiful life in which there are no problems. Dropping that does not liberate, because all craving, all greed, all lust, all anger, are rooted in this fundamental strategy of self-image to contract and localize, to create boundaries within emptiness, to grasp at emptiness. And so we must understand this process of fixation as it arises, and it arises not in a beautiful house. It arises in this moment of seeing and hearing. It arises as mind moments display themselves, and as this display is interpreted to be self and other, time and space, body and mind. This is the craving that we must understand and release.

- Anzan Hoshin Roshi

SN 35.28

PTS: S iv 19

CDB ii 1143

Adittapariyaya Sutta: The Fire Sermon

translated from the Pali by

Thanissaro Bhikkhu

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Alternate translation: Ñanamoli

Alternate format: [SuttaReadings.net icon]

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The updated version is freely available at

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I have heard that on one occasion the Blessed One was staying in Gaya, at Gaya Head, with 1,000 monks. There he addressed the monks:

"Monks, the All is aflame. What All is aflame? The eye is aflame. Forms are aflame. Consciousness at the eye is aflame. Contact at the eye is aflame. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye — experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain — that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I tell you, with birth, aging & death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs.

"The ear is aflame. Sounds are aflame...

"The nose is aflame. Aromas are aflame...

"The tongue is aflame. Flavors are aflame...

"The body is aflame. Tactile sensations are aflame...

"The intellect is aflame. Ideas are aflame. Consciousness at the intellect is aflame. Contact at the intellect is aflame. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect — experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain — that too is aflame. Aflame with what? Aflame with the fire of passion, the fire of aversion, the fire of delusion. Aflame, I say, with birth, aging & death, with sorrows, lamentations, pains, distresses, & despairs.

"Seeing thus, the well-instructed disciple of the noble ones grows disenchanted with the eye, disenchanted with forms, disenchanted with consciousness at the eye, disenchanted with contact at the eye. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the eye, experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain: With that, too, he grows disenchanted.

"He grows disenchanted with the ear...

"He grows disenchanted with the nose...

"He grows disenchanted with the tongue...

"He grows disenchanted with the body...

"He grows disenchanted with the intellect, disenchanted with ideas, disenchanted with consciousness at the intellect, disenchanted with contact at the intellect. And whatever there is that arises in dependence on contact at the intellect, experienced as pleasure, pain or neither-pleasure-nor-pain: He grows disenchanted with that too. Disenchanted, he becomes dispassionate. Through dispassion, he is fully released. With full release, there is the knowledge, 'Fully released.' He discerns that 'Birth is ended, the holy life fulfilled, the task done. There is nothing further for this world.'"

That is what the Blessed One said. Gratified, the monks delighted at his words. And while this explanation was being given, the hearts of the 1,000 monks, through no clinging (not being sustained), were fully released from fermentation/effluents."

In Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, we say the five aggregates reveal themselves to be the five wisdom Buddhas, they are the radiance of Buddha-nature (empty-clarity) itself. You should be becoming clear about this point by now, experientially. Aggregates do not cease after anatta, rather they are experienced as Buddha-nature in its primordial purity and perfection.”

“Buddhism is nothing but replacing the 'Self' in Hinduism with Condition Arising. Keep the clarity, the presence, the luminosity and eliminate the ultimate 'Self', the controller, the supreme. Still you must taste, sense, eat, hear and see Pure Awareness in every authentication. And every authentication is Bliss.” - John Tan, 2004

“Understand immense intelligence not as if someone is there to act and direct, rather as total exertion of the universe to make this moment possible; then all appearances are miraculous and marvelous.” - John Tan, 2012

“The Pristine awareness is often mistaken as the 'Self'. It is especially difficult for one that has intuitively experience the 'Self' to accept 'No-Self'. As I have told you many times that there will come a time when you will intuitively perceive the 'I' -- the pure sense of Existence but you must be strong enough to go beyond this experience until the true meaning of Emptiness becomes clear and thorough. The Pristine Awareness is the so-called True-Self' but why we do not call it a 'Self' and why Buddhism has placed so much emphasis on the Emptiness nature? This then is the true essence of Buddhism. It is needless to stress anything about 'Self' in Buddhism; there are enough of 'Logies' of the 'I" in Indian Philosophies. If one wants to know about the experience of 'I AM', go for the Vedas and Bhagavad Gita. We will not know what Buddha truly taught 2500 years ago if we buried ourselves in words. Have no doubt that The Dharma Seal is authentic and not to be confused.

When you have experienced the 'Self' and know that its nature is empty, you will know why to include this idea of a 'Self' into Buddha-Nature is truly unnecessary and meaningless. True Buddhism is not about eliminating the 'small Self' but cleansing this so called 'True Self' (Atman) with the wisdom of Emptiness.” - John Tan, 2005

"What you are suggesting is already found in Samkhya system. I.e. the twenty four tattvas are not the self aka purusha. Since this system was well known to the Buddha, if that's all his insight was, then his insight is pretty trivial. But Buddha's teachings were novel. Why where they novel? They were novel in the fifth century BCE because of his teaching of dependent origination and emptiness. The refutation of an ultimate self is just collateral damage." - Lopon Malcolm

In January 2005, John Tan wrote:

“[19:21] <^john^> learn how to experience emptiness and no-selfness. :)
[19:22] <^john^> this is the only way to liberate.
[19:22] <^john^> not to dwell too deeply into the minor aspect of pure awareness.
[19:23] <^john^> of late i have been seeing songs and poems relating to the luminosity aspect of Pure Awareness.
[19:23] <^john^> uncreated, original, mirror bright, not lost in nirvana and samsara..etc
[19:23] <^john^> what use is there?
[19:24] <ZeN`n1th> oic...
[19:24] <^john^> we have from the very beginning so and yet lost for countless aeons of lives.
[19:25] <^john^> buddha did not come to tell only about the luminosity aspect of pure awareness.
[19:25] <^john^> this has already been expressed in vedas.

[19:25] <^john^> but it becomes Self.
[19:25] <^john^> the ultimate controller
[19:26] <^john^> the deathless
[19:26] <^john^> the supreme.. etc
[19:26] <^john^> this is the problem.
[19:26] <^john^> this is not the ultimate nature of Pure Awareness.
[19:27] <^john^> for full enlightenment to take place, experience the clarity and emptiness. That's all.”

And in March 2006, John Tan said:

<^john^> the different between hinduism and buddhism is they return to the "I AM" and clings to it.
<^john^> always "I" as the source.
<ZeN`n1th> icic
<^john^> but in buddhism it is being replaced by "emptiness nature", there is a purest, an entity, a stage to be gained or achieved is an illusion.
<^john^> there is none. No self to be found. No identity to assumed. Nothing attained.
<ZeN`n1th> oic..
<^john^> this is truly the All.
<^john^> so for a teaching that is so thorough and complete, why must it resort back to a "True Self"?
<ZeN`n1th> hmm but i got a question about just now you say impermanent... but mahayana texts also say tathagathagarbha is permanent right?
<^john^> yes but for other reasons.
<ZeN`n1th> what kind of reasons
<ZeN`n1th> wat you mean
<^john^> first you must know that there is really a very subtle difference between pure subjectivity and emptiness nature.
<ZeN`n1th> icic
<^john^> for one that has experienced in full emptiness nature, does he/she need to create an extra "True Self"?
<ZeN`n1th> so wat difference
<ZeN`n1th> no
<^john^> he already knows and experiences and completely understand the arising cause and conditions of why the "true self" was created...
<^john^> will he still be confused?
<^john^> he knows exactly what is happening, the reality of the 'self'.
<ZeN`n1th> icic..
<^john^> i would say it is due to his compassion to let the other sects have a chance to understand the dharma that he said so.
<^john^> this is what i think.
<^john^> but there is no necessity to preach something extra.

<ZeN`n1th> oic
<^john^> in light of emptiness nature, "True Self" is not necessary.
<ZeN`n1th> icic
<^john^> the so called "purest" is already understood, there is no clinging.
<^john^> there is hearing, no hearer...etc
<^john^> is already beyond "True Self".
<ZeN`n1th> oic
<^john^> yet it exactly knows the stage of "True Self".
<^john^> if there is no hearing...then something is wrong.
<^john^>
<^john^> but there is hearing but no hearer.
<ZeN`n1th> hahaha
<ZeN`n1th> oic
<^john^> put your time into practice and understanding of no-self and emptiness.
<^john^>
<ZeN`n1th> ok

Also related: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/MN/MN1.html - Thanissaro Bhikkhu explained how in this teaching Buddha refuted the teaching of a Source/Root based on Samkhya.

The whole teaching of Buddha is revolutionary, it replaces the need for the view of an Essence and explains reality in terms of pure process and dependent origination, and liberation is taught without recoursing to a metaphysical principle, or some kind of deathless Atman-Brahman as the principle or ground for liberation, or as Archaya Mahayogi Shridhar Rana Rinpoche said, “in the Buddhist paradigm, it is not only ‘not necessary’ to have an eternal ground for liberation, but in fact, the belief in such a ground itself is part of the dynamics of ignorance.” (Source: Madhyamika Buddhism Vis-a-vis Hindu Vedanta, https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/02/madhyamika-buddhism-vis-vis-hindu.html)

"It's not in my nature to seek Buddhism. I have a strong Taoist background and passion for Hinduism when I was young. So philosophically and culturally, essencelessness is not a view that suits me. But it takes painful experiences to come to a willingness to let go, to see the truth of impermanence and anatta. To challenge and come to an understanding that you don't actually have to do this and that.... (or have an) ultimate here and there to release. But rather to truly accept and look deeply into impermanence, then you will let go and we can come to a new understanding of the relationship of suffering and the truth of suffering having to do with a fundamental paradigm we hold so dearly.

..Your mindset and experience can change, so is your understanding, and you just begin a new path with new understanding. Impermanence from personal, micro and macro view. You see when you see impermanence and use it as a door in practice, your view changes also, from Vipassana observing the minutest sensations in our bodily sensations to appreciating a view in current quantum physics, macro view, to observe events. So our idea changes and we adopt such understanding in our life over time. Sometimes it really depends and it needs the right condition and situation to

trigger it, just like the case of financial crisis.” - John Tan, 2015, What is an Authentic Buddhist Teaching?, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2016/07/what-is-authentic-buddhist-teaching.html

You can also see that whenever the Buddha taught about ‘not-conditioned’ or ‘death-free’, it is always about the release and elimination of the afflictive conditions driving rebirth and suffering, and not the positing of some kind of eternal ground ala Advaita Vedanta:

Buddha said in **Dhātuvibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Elements**

https://www.wisdompubs.org/book/middle-length-discourses-buddha/selections/middle-length-discourses-140-dhatuvibhanga-sutta

28. “Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced covetousness, desire, and lust; now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced anger, ill will, and hate; now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced ignorance and delusion; now he has abandoned them, cut them off [246] at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Therefore a bhikkhu possessing [this peace] possesses the supreme foundation of peace. For this, bhikkhu, is the supreme noble peace, namely, the pacification of lust, hate, and delusion.

29. “So it was with reference to this that it was said: ‘One should not neglect wisdom, should preserve truth, should cultivate relinquishment, and should train for peace.’

30. “‘The tides of conceiving do not sweep over one who stands upon these [foundations], and when the tides of conceiving no longer sweep over him he is called a sage at peace.’ So it was said. And with reference to what was this said?

31. “Bhikkhu, ‘I am’ is a conceiving; ‘I am this’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall not be’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be possessed of form’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be formless’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be percipient’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be non-percipient’ is a conceiving; ‘I shall be neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient’ is a conceiving. Conceiving is a disease, conceiving is a tumour, conceiving is a dart. ***By overcoming all conceivings, bhikkhu, one is called a sage at peace. And the sage at peace is not born, does not age, does not die; he is not shaken and is not agitated. For there is nothing present in him by which he might be born. Not being born, how could he age? Not ageing, how could he die? Not dying, how could he be shaken? Not being shaken, why should he be agitated?***

32. “So it was with reference to this that it was said: ‘The tides of conceiving do not sweep over one who stands upon these [foundations], and when the tides of conceiving no longer sweep over him he is called a sage at peace.’ Bhikkhu, bear in mind this brief exposition of the six elements.”

I have written a very long article that talks about what Nibbana/Nirvana (cessation/extinguishment) means in Buddhadharma here: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/01/the-deathless-in-buddhadharma.html

Also see: [insight] [buddhism] A reconsideration of the meaning of "Stream-Entry" considering the data points of both pragmatic Dharma and traditional Buddhism

A few excerpts from the link:

“Hi Justin Struble, we have to be very careful in interpreting that Nibbana sutta. First of all we have to understand what 'Nirvana/Nibbana' means in context. As Ven Hui-feng puts it, "keep in mind the basic metaphorical meaning of the term nirvana, the extinguishing of a flame". The main analogy given by Buddha for nirvana is the extinguishing of a flame. As Ven Nanananda also pointed out,

"Regarding this concept of Nibbàna too, the worldling is generally tempted to entertain some kind of ma¤¤anà, or me-thinking. Even some philosophers are prone to that habit. They indulge in some sort of prolific conceptualisation and me-thinking on the basis of such conventional usages as `in Nib-bàna', `from Nibbàna', `on reaching Nibbàna' and `my Nib-bàna'. By hypostasizing Nibbàna they de-velop a substance view, even of this concept, just as in the case of pañhavi, or earth. Let us now try to determine whether this is justifi-able.

The primary sense of the word Nibbàna is `extinction', or `extin-guishment'. We have already discussed this point with reference to such contexts as Aggivacchagottasutta.[8] In that dis-course the Bud-dha explained the term Nibbàna to the wan-dering ascetic Vaccha-got-ta with the help of a simile of the ex-tinction of a fire. Simply be-cause a fire is said to go out, one should not try to trace it, wondering where it has gone. The term Nibbàna is essentially a verbal noun. We also came across the phrase nibbuto tveva saïkhaü gacchati, "it is reck-oned as `extinguished'".[9]"

Extinction of what? Extinction of passion, aggression and delusion driving the whole mass of samsara. Extinction of the the whole mass of suffering/samsara in the twelve links from ignorance up to old age, sickness and death.

Next is the terms 'unconditioned/death-free/etc' it is very easy to reify this in terms of a metaphysical entity. This is not the case.

Here are some quotations which should hopefully clarify:

Nana/Geoff: ""Firstly, while the translation of asaṃskṛta as “the unconditioned” is fairly common, it’s a rather poor translation that all too easily leads to reification. The term asaṃskṛta refers to a negation of conditioned factors, and the meaning is better conveyed by “not-conditioned.” Secondly, for Sautrāntika commentators, and many mahāyānika commentators as well, an analytical cessation (pratisaṃkhyānirodha) is a non-implicative negation (prasajyapratiṣedha), i.e. a negation that doesn’t imply the presence of some other entity, and therefore nirvāṇa simply refers to a cessation that terminates the defilements and fetters that are abandoned by the correct practice of the noble path. It doesn’t refer to an entity or state that is substantially existent (dravyasat).” "

Nana/Geoff: "One has to be careful with such descriptions which may seem to be pointing to some sort of truly existent "unconditioned ground." Nibbāna is the extinguishment of the mental outflows (āsavā). The liberated mind is measureless (appamāṇa). This is not a "state of oneness with all of existence." It's an absence of identification (anattatā). It's non-indicative (anidassana), unestablished (appatiṭṭha), and not-dependent (anissita). None of these adjectives entail any sort of metaphysical "ground of being" or "unconditioned absolute." They are all negations. An arahant has simply "gone out."

tiltbillings: "There is no "deathless." That is a bad translation leading to an objectification/reification of the idea of awakening. With awakening, there is no more rebirth, one is free from death. (31 words.)""

Loppon Namdrol/Malcolm: “When you have eradicated all afflictions which cause rebirth, this is all the deathlessness you need. No more birth, BAM! no more death.”

Buddha: "SN 43 Asaṅkhata Saṃyutta (1-44 combined & abridged):

And what, monks, is the not-fabricated (asaṅkhata)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the not-fabricated.

And what, monks, is the not-inclined (anata)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the not-inclined.

And what, monks, is the outflowless (anāsava)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the outflowless.

And what, monks, is the truth (sacca)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the truth.

And what, monks, is the farther shore (pāra)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the farther shore.

And what, monks, is the subtle (nipuṇa)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the subtle.

And what, monks, is the very hard to see (sududdasa)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the very hard to see.

And what, monks, is the unaging (ajajjara)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the unaging.

And what, monks, is the stable (dhuva)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the stable.

And what, monks, is the undisintegrating (apalokita)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the undisintegrating.

And what, monks, is the non-indicative (anidassana)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the non-indicative.

And what, monks, is the unproliferated (nippapañca)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the unproliferated.

And what, monks, is the peaceful (santa)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the peaceful.

And what, monks, is the death-free (amata)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the death-free.

And what, monks, is the sublime (paṇīta)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the sublime.

And what, monks, is the auspicious (siva)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the auspicious.

And what, monks, is the secure (khema)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the secure.

And what, monks, is the elimination of craving (taṇhākkhaya)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the elimination of craving.

And what, monks, is the wonderful (acchariya)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the wonderful.

And what, monks, is the amazing (abbhuta)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the amazing.

And what, monks, is the calamity-free (anītika)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the calamity-free.

And what, monks, is the dhamma free of calamity (anītikadhamma)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the dhamma free of calamity.

And what, monks, is extinguishment (nibbāna)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called extinguishment.

And what, monks, is the unafflicted (abyāpajjha)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the unafflicted.

And what, monks, is dispassion (virāga)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called dispassion.

And what, monks, is purity (suddhi)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called purity.

And what, monks, is freedom (mutti)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called freedom.

And what, monks, is the unadhesive (anālaya)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the unadhesive.

And what, monks, is the island (dīpa)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the island.

And what, monks, is the cave (leṇa)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the cave.

And what, monks, is the shelter (tāṇa)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the shelter.

And what, monks, is the refuge (saraṇa)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the refuge.

And what, monks, is the destination (parāyana)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the destination." - SN 43 Asaṅkhata Saṃyutta

I can provide many more quotations but this will suffice for now, I think. Nirvana is extinction, like the blowing out of a flame, it is simply and merely the end of suffering and afflictions and does not imply a metaphysical substantial existent as some may postulate. There is no "The Unconditioned" or "The Unborn" or "The Deathless" as some sort of

metaphysical essence. There is an unconditioned dharma - analytical cessation (nirvana) - that is the end of birth and death (death-free), is not conditioned (by afflictive causes and manifestations) etc.

All these are classic Nirvana stuff found in the earliest teachings in Pali suttas. In Mahayana emptiness, there is another understanding of "unconditioned" and that is as what Kyle said which I find to be very well said:

"The unconditioned is the emptiness of the skandhas.

Recognition of the emptiness of the skandhas means that the skandhas are non-arisen, what has not arisen cannot be conditioned."

"The basis should be understood to be in accordance with the following insight from Nāgārjuna:

- *Since arising, abiding and perishing are not established,*

the conditioned is not established;
since the conditioned is never established,
how can the unconditioned be established?
and,

- *Outside of the saṃskṛtas [conditioned dharmas], there are no asaṃskṛta [unconditioned dharmas], and the true nature [bhūtalakṣaṇa] of the saṃskṛta is exactly asaṃskṛta. The saṃskṛtas being empty, etc. the asaṃskṛtas themselves are also empty, for the two things are not different. Besides, some people, hearing about the defects of the saṃskṛtadharmas, become attached [abhiniveśante] to the asaṃskṛtadharmas and, as a result of this attachment, develop fetters.*

The latter portion of the second quotation addresses your issue." - Kyle Dixon

In any case, whether the classical nirvana understanding of the earliest text, or the emptiness understanding of unconditioned/non-arisen, there is no postulating of a truly existing metaphysical essence.” - Soh, 2014

Also, in the Mahayana teachings, the not-conditioned is simply the emptiness and non-arising of the conditioned,

“For example the *Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra* states:
Outside of the saṃskṛtas [conditioned dharmas], there are no asaṃskṛta [unconditioned dharmas], and the true nature [bhūtalakṣaṇa] of the saṃskṛta is exactly asaṃskṛta. The saṃskṛtas being empty, etc. the asaṃskṛtas themselves are also empty, for the two things are not different. Besides, some people, hearing about the defects of the saṃskṛtadharmas, become attached [abhiniveśante] to the asaṃskṛtadharmas and, as a result of this attachment, develop fetters.
Nāgārjuna communicates the same thing here:

Since arising, abiding and perishing are not established, the conditioned is not established; since the conditioned is never established, how can the unconditioned be established?” - Kyle Dixon, 2019

"Samsara is not even slightly differentiable from nirvana; nirvana is not even slightly differentiable from samsara; whatever is the limit of nirvana, that is the limit of samsara; whatever is the limit of samsara, that is the limit of nirvana— there isn't even the subtlest distinction between those two."

-- Nāgārjuna

"That which, taken as causal or dependent, is the process of being born and passing on, is, taken non-causally and beyond all dependence, declared to be nirvāna." ~ MMK XXV 9, translation by Sprung

Nirvana is samsara rightly seen, it is not something apart from samsara.

It is a very common misinterpretation among Hindus but also many Buddhists, that the ‘death-free’ (amata) of Nibbana/Nirvana is referring to a deathless Self or unconditioned ground, substrate, substratum, substance, etc. This is not just the view/misinterpretation among Advaita Vedantins, and not just among certain Vajrayana and Mahayana Buddhists, but even the Theravadins (especially the Thai Forest Traditions - though there are exceptions) can be prone to misinterpreting Nibbana/Nirvana in terms of the extreme of eternalism. Their much prized Poo Roo (Knower) and changeless Citta (Mind) is none other than the I AM or Eternal Witness. I have just watched a video where a famous Thai Forest monk described the unborn, uncreated reality as one’s Consciousness in contrast to the transient and passing conditioned states of experiences. This kind of view is common among the Thai Forest teachings. Ajahn Brahmavamso, one of the well known monks in the Thai forest tradition, criticized such a view and said that (not in these exact words) many of those Thai forest monks, even those of high status, fail to understand Buddhadharma and are holding views no different from Hindus by reifying and clinging to the Poo Roo (“The One Who Knows”). I agree.

The tendency to deviate from the Buddhadharma and fall into the two extremes of eternalism and nihilism runs rampant in all the current traditions of Buddhism, be it Theravada, or Mahayana, or Vajrayana. It is quite disappointing sometimes when I look through the bookshelves on Buddhism, as I always find that there are very, very few clear-eyed authors and teachers. Now, if I am reading a Hindu or Advaita book, I will not have thoughts of disappointment since they are accurately portraying the views of Adi Shankara, and it is all good with me. I do appreciate Advaita Vedanta and continue to recommend Advaita books to those pursuing the path of self-realization, and books like those of Ramana Maharshi have been very helpful for the earlier period of my practice. But to present the views and realizations of Advaita as if they are the views and realization of Buddha? I think this does not do justice to the Buddha and his teachings, and if Buddha were to be around, he would have forcefully reprimanded these people with very strong words like how he verbally reprimanded and trashed his monk Bhikkhu Sati. In the absence of Buddha, we need more people to do his work of ‘reprimanding these people (that misrepresents him)’ by openly criticizing such views (both eternalism and nihilism) without reservation. It is necessary for the continued flourishing and non-degeneration of Buddhadharma.

禅宗有个公案，僧问大同曰：“天上天下唯我独尊，如何是我？”，大曰：“推倒老师有什么过？”健曰：“往往有等禅师，示人：‘高高山上立，深深海底行。’皆欲以这天上天下之神我，害尽天下苍生。一般瞎汉，死死执着这个，最难出也；打倒不惟无过也，且救他慧命，是释迦真儿孙。”

Translation: Ch'an school has a koan, monk asks Da Tong, "Throughout heaven and earth only I AM the world honoured one, what is this Self?" Da answers, "any faults for pushing down the teacher?" Jian says, "often there are Ch'an teachers, teaching people, 'We should stand atop the highest mountain, walk the floor of the deepest ocean'". With this God-Self of the Universe (Atman-Brahman), [one] causes harm to the common people. The commoners stubbornly cling to this, and it is most difficult to come out of it, [thus] not only is there no faults in pushing down [such a teacher], one furthermore saves the person's wisdom-life, and is a true child of Shakya.

It does not mean literally or physically pushing the teacher down, it just means refuting them strongly when necessary in order that others do not be misled by such teachers.

Of course, criticizing faulty teachings and views should be done moderately, respectfully and appropriately (not for the purpose of creating confrontations with the students of other teachers - what a waste of precious practice time!), and we should know that there are wisdom and lessons that are valuable from the sharing of any genuine practitioners and teachers regardless of their depth of realization. Convincing others only work if they have faith in Buddha to begin with or they seem very open minded to investigate and question their own views and paradigm. Open mindedness is key, and conditions are vital - as John Tan said, even the Buddha cannot save someone who does not have yuan (conditions) （佛不度无缘之人）, and as John told me, he only speaks when he discerns the conditions are there for genuine communication, and whoever he speaks to about the dharma have come to direct realization very quickly (it’s true). Conditions and timing are vital and John Tan seems to be always sensitive and deeply aware of the precise conditions and timing, there are times where John Tan told me to quickly and immediately reply with a certain message to someone because the precise condition and timing is ripe for an opening for that particular person, and after I came back from the toilet he told me I missed the timing and the conditions were gone.

Without proper conditions, conversations might just end up in endless repetitive arguments and echo chambers with each camp repeating their own views (I have done plenty of useless online debating 10+ years ago).

As John Tan said in 2007,

“(2:31 PM) Thusness: yamizi meeting your X right? *(yamizi is an online moniker of someone who wished to discuss about some controversial stuff such as the authenticity of Tibetan Buddhism, etc with my Chinese Mahayana Buddhism teacher)*
(2:31 PM) AEN: yea. What about it
(2:32 PM) Thusness: nothing... just think how meaningless :)

(2:33 PM) AEN: hahahaha.. X also think it’s meaningless, she can’t find a reason to meet them :P but no choice they want to meet
(2:34 PM) Thusness: only when yuan *(condition)* arises, then there is true value. :) otherwise it is meaningless. :) it is like girl meeting guy at the first sight. the chemistry is strong. lol
(2:34 PM) AEN: lol so you mean what, yamizi and X no yuan
(2:36 PM) Thusness: if the right time and right place aren't there, there is not much value. Only value in egoistic satisfaction.
(2:36 PM) AEN: icic.. so you mean what
(2:36 PM) Thusness: in general.
(2:36 PM) AEN: yamizi they all no yuan with X?
(2:36 PM) Thusness: remember this. :)
(2:37 PM) AEN: then how you know if its right time right place etc
(2:37 PM) Thusness: there is no need to know, it merely arises. just remember this, our mind is blocked, that is why we think that efforting is the way to get things done. in actual case it isn't. it creates only conditions”

D wrote: One can see this tendency to reify in many of the nonduality speakers on YouTube. I also liked your remarks, later on, about the confusion between nonduality and passivity. Thanks for sharing.

Soh replied: Yeah. Almost all neo-Advaitins with very very few exceptions (only one exception I can think of: Tony Parsons - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/02/tony-parsons-no-union-container-or.html) reify a universal awareness.

Also, all traditional Advaitins without exceptions (except perhaps people like Sri Atmananda although Greg Goode pointed out that he basically went against traditional scriptures in his final proclamations) reify universal awareness, since it is the key doctrine that defines their entire tradition - Brahman is the universal awareness and ultimate reality, one without a second. Disagreeing with this key tenet that defines the entire tradition is likely to put you outside the tradition -- as we see happen in cases like Buddha and his disciples, and even modern Indians like U.G. and J. Krishnamurti who had an insight that deconstructs Atman-Brahman. These people, understandably, became iconoclasts that broke off from their tradition, rejected the authority of all teachers in the whole of their Indian sub-continent, and rejected all scriptural authority. Because although they may have gone through the I AM phase (we know J. Krishnamurti went through that), they later had a further realization which repudiates the Upanishads. We also see that happen with Actual Freedom Richard.

As I wrote before in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/three-paradigms-with-nondual-luminosity.html
It is my experience that deeper insights into 3)
of the non-essentialist or non-reductionist kind leads to deeper
freedoms and liberation. However there are many teachings belonging to
1) that does not see essentialism or substantialism as 'wrong' but
completely buys into this view. As Greg Goode wrote before,

Greg Goode: *Oh,*
another thing - Advaitins don't see (what we're calling)

susbstantialism or essentialism as a bad thing. For them, it is the only thing. Since Brahman = truth, being and freedom from suffering, it makes no sense to be without it. One needs it even to deny it, is the thinking there. So even the standards of evaluation are different. Not to mention the varna/caste system, which is defended on upanishadic, doctrinal grounds. Oops, I just mentioned it!February 10 at 12:33pm · Like · 3
Greg Goode:
I love the Mandukya Upanishad and the Gaudapada Karika. I think it is effective and profound, and like many views, doesn't need to be reconciled with other views. I know that some Advaitins shy away from that Upanishad because of gossip about G's Buddhist influences. I studied that text for a few years, and it never felt subversive to me...February 10 at 12:43pm · Like · 4

As for those who hold the Advaitin doctrine as definitive and authoritative, it might be useless debating or trying to convince them. Only those who are non-dogmatic, curious, inquisitive, open to challenging their assumptions and views -- be they derived partly from their own contemplative realizations or from doctrinal traditions, may come to appreciate a non-substantialist form of insight or realization.

It is only in Buddhism where we experientially deconstruct universal awareness in all traditions, be it Theravada, Mahayana or Vajrayana (although many adherents and teachers of these traditions themselves fall into the trap of reifying a universal awareness).

Freedom from the Four Extremes

The Buddha rejects the four extremes: existence, non-existence, both existence and non-existence, neither existence nor non-existence, whether it be with regards to the world, or the self, or the Buddha/Tathagata. This is through comprehending that the nature of mind/phenomena is to be empty of self, empty of inherent existence, and merely dependently originates.

“Saṃyutta Nikāya 12
Connected Discourses on Causation
15. Kaccanagotta

At Savatthī. Then the Venerable Kaccanagotta approached the Blessed One, paid homage to him, sat down to one side, and said to him: “Venerable sir, it is said, ‘right view, right view.’ In what way, venerable sir, is there right view?”

“This world, Kaccana, for the most part depends upon a duality—upon the notion of existence and the notion of nonexistence. But for one who sees the origin of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of nonexistence in regard to the world. And for one who sees the cessation of the world as it really is with correct wisdom, there is no notion of existence in regard to the world.

“This world, Kaccana, is for the most part shackled by engagement, clinging, and adherence. But this one with right view does not become engaged and cling through that engagement and clinging, mental standpoint, adherence, underlying tendency; he does not take a stand about ‘my self.’ He has no perplexity or doubt that what arises is only suffering arising, what ceases is only suffering ceasing. His knowledge about this is independent of others. It is in this way, Kaccana, that there is right view. “‘All exists’: Kaccana, this is one extreme. ‘All does not exist’: this is the second extreme. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the Tathagata teaches the Dhamma by the middle: ‘With ignorance as condition, volitional formations come to be; with volitional formations as condition, consciousness.... Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering. But with the remainderless fading away and cessation of ignorance comes cessation of volitional formations; with the cessation of volitional formations, cessation of consciousness.... Such is the cessation of this whole mass of suffering.’“ - https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN12_15.html

“...“What do you think, Anuradha, do you regard the Tathagata as in form?”—“No, venerable sir.”—“Do you regard the Tathagata as apart from form?”—“No, venerable sir.”—“Do you regard the Tathagata as in feeling? As apart from feeling? As in perception? As apart from perception? As in volitional formations? As apart from volitional formations? As in consciousness? As apart from consciousness?”—“No, venerable sir.”
“What do you think, Anuradha, do you regard form, feeling, perception, volitional formations, and consciousness taken together as the Tathagata?”—“No, venerable sir.”
“What do you think, Anuradha, do you regard the Tathagata as one who is without form, without feeling, without perception, without volitional formations, without consciousness?”—“No, venerable sir.”
“But, Anuradha, when the Tathagata is not apprehended by you as real and actual here in this very life, is it fitting for you to declare: ‘Friends, when a Tathagata is describing a Tathagata—the highest type of person, the supreme person, the attainer of the supreme attainment—he describes him apart from these four cases: ‘The Tathagata exists after death,’ or ... ‘The Tathagata neither exists nor does not exist after death’?”
“No, venerable sir.”
“Good, good, Anuradha! Formerly, Anuradha, and also now, I make known just suffering and the cessation of suffering.”
- Anuradha Sutta, https://suttacentral.net/sn22.86/en/bodhi

“And in thinking, there is just thoughts. When you look for thoughts, you cannot find anything.

Therefore re-examine the idea of existing and non-existing, they do not apply.” - John Tan, 2019

“No behind, presence as only form is anatta
Presence-as-form is merely appearing, nothing there, that's emptiness (the nature of Presence)

...

Not only no who, but truly no it, no there, no here, no now, no when, no where, no arising, no ceasing, no abiding or place of abidance. Coming to rest in the nature of presence with no place to rest, whole field of spontaneous illusory display emerges as empty-clarity-bliss.

...

I really like a statement by Jang-gya, “appearance negates existence”

It starts with the very vivid "Presence" (or you can call it Awareness or Clarity) that is simply shining as the very vividness of forms, sounds, thoughts, whatever appears, as the subject/object or perceiver/perceived dichotomy has collapsed into a non-conceptual experience of the vividness of whatever manifests with zero sense of distance. There is no more standalone Presence or Awareness or Clarity in anatta. The illusion of a background Self/Mind has been penetrated. Even so, the very empty nature of 'foreground Presence' may not yet reveal itself initially.

Let's say you're looking at the floor, or a table, or whatever it is. It seems very solid and real, but then upon some investigation it's realised to be merely appearing without substance or essence, and that happens to be the very nature of Presence -- vividly appearing according to conditions but completely empty of anything 'there', empty of an 'it-ness' or 'floor-ness' or any sort of substance. Basically it's sort of like suddenly an apparent figure you've been looking at or talking to is suddenly realised to be literally a hologram. The very nature of Presence as merely appearing without substance basically negates the extreme of existence.

For me the nature of Presence reveals in a more experiential sort of examination rather than through analytical reasonings. Like what Thusness wrote in his article https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html

"If we observe thought and ask where does thought arise, how does it arise, what is ‘thought’ like. 'Thought' will reveal its nature is empty -- vividly present yet completely un-locatable. It is very important not to infer, think or conceptualise but feel with our entire being this ‘ungraspability’ and 'unlocatability'. It seems to reside 'somewhere' but there is no way to locate it. It is just an impression of somewhere "there" but never "there". Similarly “here-ness” and “now-ness” are merely impressions formed by sensations, aggregates of causes and conditions, nothing inherently ‘there’; equally empty like ‘selfness’."

That said not everyone uses or likes the term "Presence". Tsongkhapa doesn't use that term. You can substitute that for other terms like "dharma" etc, it's just the empty and luminously clear nature of the display.

Foreground emptying has this taste where appearance negates existence.” - Soh, 2018

“You keep mistaking the two truths for principles, rather than what they are, that is, cognitions.

The terms "emptiness," "dependent designation," and "middle way" are synonyms. They refer to the same thing. In other words, there is no sublime middle that can be peeled away from the two truths. The two truths are inseparable, this is why Dharmamitra, in his commentary on Haribhadra's *Sphutartha* commentary on the Perfection of Wisdom

states:

Called "deep," because some people do not understand the inseparable two truths, and for them it becomes a place of fear, its depth difficult to realize."

It is possible we are talking about the same thing, but thus far, I don't think so. Jayānanda states in his commentary on Candra's *Introduction to the Middle Way*:

The middle way is understood as dependent origination, having abandoned grasping to permanence and annihilation.

And:

The middle way is the path free from concepts of entities and nonentities.

Nāgārjuna again, in the *Vigrahavyavartani*:

I pay homage the supreme peerless Buddha who taught
emptiness, dependent origination, and the middle way to have one meaning.

Or Buddhapalita:

"Having a view of existence or nonexistence with respect to entities results in many errors, therefore, "entities lack inherent existence" is seeing the truth, i.e., the middle way, and that is proof of the ultimate.

Bhavaviveka states:

Whatever is emptiness, that is designated in dependence. Because the convention of mundane and transcendent is asserted, there is designation dependent on appropriation. That is the middle way, because the middle is free from the extremes arising and nonarising, existence and nonexistence...For the meditation of the middle way it is said that one does not conceive at all, "The eye is an existent entity," "The eye is not an existence entity," and so on. The Ārya Ratnakuta Sūtra states, "Kāśyapa, "Existence" is one extreme; 'Nonexistence" is the second extreme, whatever is between those extremes is without form and cannot be shown, is unimpeded, nonabiding, does not appear, is not perceptible, is not a place." Those are the proofs. "Path" is a convention for "method of obtaining."" – Arcaya Malcolm, 2018, *https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=66&t=30010*

+A and -A Emptiness (The Two Yogic Tastes of Emptiness)

+A and -A originated from Diamond Sutra’s A is not A, therefore A is A.

+A Emptiness is Total Exertion and Maha. -A Emptiness is the empty, non-arising and illusory nature of presencing appearance. Phase 6 is about replacing the whole view with Dependent Origination and Emptiness through direct realization, and +A and -A are the experiences from it. However, it is possible to have glimpses of +A and -A and still lack definitive realization. For example, one may have taste of dream-like nature from all appearances arising as one’s radiance, but it is still a glimpse or experience than the realization of emptiness, which overturns the view of seeing phenomena in terms of existing by way of its own essence, arising, abiding and ceasing.

In phase 6, it is no longer about clarity (clarity is already implicit and forgotten rather than singled out or over-emphasized). It is possible to realize and experience +A without going into -A, or realize and experience -A without going into +A, and it is also possible to experience both and later come to an integration of +A and -A through an experiential realization. Total exertion too has various depths, at a mature phase the total exertion penetrates not only the ten directions but the three times (past, present and future).

“...the conceptual notions of mind, appearances and external objects are all deconstructed. [But] It doesn't mean a blank nothing. Vivid Appearances will unfailingly manifest, that is what Mipham meant by coalescence of appearance and emptiness... ...I am referring to complete deconstruction into Primordial Purity as emptiness [-A].” – John Tan

“To me, Gorampa and Mipham are more on exhaustion of the conventional into freedom from all elaborations. I classify it under the -A of emptiness in ATR context.

Tsongkhapa on the other hand embraced the conventional wholeheartedly into freedom from all fabrications (fabrication as in attachment to intrinsic existence). I classify it under the +A of emptiness in ATR context. This is very similar to Dogen's total exertion.

Ippo-gujin (total exertion), I will define here as wholehearted engagement in the mundane activities of everydayness of everyday, essentially no different from bahiya sutta of in the seen just the seen. In this actualisation, entire "body mind environment universe" is one participation without any need to subsume into an all encompassing substantial non-dual awareness; instead all conventional diversities are fully intact yet miraculously involved in a harmonious unity.

When I read Tsongkhapa's thought somehow I can relate quite easily with my ATR background, from his "one nature different isolates" to "mere existence" to non-dual espistemology via just simply focusing on understanding "intrinsic existence" thoroughly.

Dogen's total exertion is the mystical and zen-ish approach of epistemic non-dual and often presented in a cryptic manner 😁 whereas Tsongkhapa's is the rational, logical and systematic way towards epistemic non-dual. I think they make good complements. Unfortunately I know too little of Tsongkhapa's tantric teachings to understand how his views are being integrated into his tantric practices.

Robert Thurman came to my mind when Edmond Cigale mentioned about him. Since he was the Je Tsongkhapa Professor of Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Studies at Columbia Universits and once commented that Dogen's Zen is very tantric, I think it will be interesting if he has an article on it. In case u write to him, pls don't mention abt ATR, Soh Wei Yu will create havoc out of it. 🤣 ” – John Tan

“The world of interrelatedness by Adyashanti is total exertion. To me I would say the gelugpas or Tsongkhapa view is more total exertion (+A) and Mipham is more the tradition school of freedom from extremes (-A).” – John Tan

“That is great insight but not just thoughts, sound, smell..etc. What about colors, lights...vividly vision? Where is the lurid scenery right before the eyes now? Don't privileged mind over phenomena or phenomena over mind.

It does not only apply only to referent of conceptual constructs r not found, even non-dual presence is not found...taste this not found deeply...the -A...

Then look at DO....if mind is de-constructed, there is no mind and into anatta, and phenomena too are deconstructed....without privileging either mind or phenomena, move deeply into dependent designation/origination, taste the formation, deconstruction and see the freedom of natural and spontaneous perfection.

Post anatta, insight is not so much about the radiance of presence, that is a given, it is the +A and -A taste...” – John Tan

"One doesn't realize how beautiful Prasangika nominalism truly is. If you genuinely want to explore it, don't waste time on unfruitful discussions with Jax or by continuously pasting things to me. Rather, focus on total exertion and dependent designations; they integrate so perfectly and beautifully, creating an entire worldview in themselves. This perspective includes everything without either dispelling or affirming the internal and external worlds—a true middle way—and bases its entire worldview on names alone, which is profoundly beautiful, especially as it allows for the integration of anatta, total exertion, and emptiness. I've only recently come to appreciate this as I seriously contemplate Tsongkhapa’s semantic nominalism. I now value the two truths even more, especially the conventional world, when viewed with the experiential insight of total exertion.

Actually, you can't just read about Tsongkhapa’s semantic nominalism; you must integrate it with an understanding of total exertion and emptiness, without resorting to mere non-conceptuality—just the linguistics beauty with all the constructs. Your current experiences and insights are sufficient to integrate these perspectives. The positive and negative aspects (+A and -A) blend perfectly, and the flavors of anatta, emptiness, and total exertion harmonize beautifully. Internal and external worlds are bridged by the concept of 'names only.' It’s no wonder that Tsongkhapa does not reject the external world and does not need a reflexive awareness. By the way, I do not know whether it is Tsongkhapa’s view but it is just beautiful when seen in light of total exertion and emptiness.

However, Alan Wallace’s notion of 'coming into existence' is also extremely important." – John Tan

~ *Total Exertion and Maha (+A)*

In earlier writings, John Tan used Maha as a descriptor and in latter writings he used both “Maha” and “Total Exertion”, but what they are describing is the same. Maha is a Sanskrit word that means “great”, which you can understand as infinite vastness without boundaries. In the experience of Maha/total exertion, there is the experience that the centerless and boundless infinitude of the universe, i.e. all conditions of the ten directions (spatial) and three times (temporal), are exerting even a simple activity of breathing, eating and walking. Upon the maturing of insights even after anatta realization, as John Tan wrote in 2009, that Maha must become a natural state. It should be your persisting baseline experience, without which the anatta experience and insight has not fully matured.”

“The Maha experience that I share with longchen [Sim Pern Chong] is very important. After the maturing of non-dual experience, this greatness without boundaries and universe doing the work is also understood as part of the natural state.” - John Tan, 2009

Watch these two very good videos by A. H. Almaas which describes total exertion: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/01/ahalmaas.html

John Tan likes another quote by A. H. Almaas: “Understanding the orientation of continual practice, the attitude of devotion to what is real, gets us closer to the mystery of the relationship between practice and realization. When we first learn to practice, we usually have an experience of ourselves practicing. As we come to more thoroughly understand the nature of the self and of reality, our sense of self transforms until, at some point, we realize that when one is practicing, when one is meditating, when one is inquiring, when one is chanting, it is not one particular individual that is practicing, it is the totality of all that there is that is practicing. The more continual our practice and the more unflagging our orientation toward reality, the more our understanding of who or what practices can shift from an identified self to the totality of reality.”

“Maha means great without boundaries. When I use the term ‘Maha’, I am expressing an experience of that immensity... what causes or what are the conditions that trigger ‘maha’?

1. Samadhi in a prolonged period of oneness
2. Total exertion where one feels so immensely connected with everything
3. A prolonged period of non-dual experience where the boundaries of subject and object dissolves
4. Non-doership into action

In whatever cases, the sense of self drops and evaporates. But how the sense of self drops is the question. Is it a form of insight like anatta or is it an experience or a particular state?” - John Tan, 2019

"Total exertion has 2 flavors: the interpermeation and interpenetration of all things and wholeheartedness of action without self/Self.", “Total exertion is not just interpenetration. Maha is an experience of great beyond measure. It is an

experience of everything being consumed as it. Only in anatta this experience can be accessed without much issue. So [for] I AM if [one is] without that experience [of I AM] is short of I AM... ...I have told you experientially there is no difference [between I AM and anatta]. Only a refinement of view.” ~ John Tan, 2019

“In ceremony there are forms and there are sounds, there is understanding and there is believing. In liturgy there is only intimacy. Haven't you heard the ancient master's teaching: Seeing forms with the whole body-and-mind, hearing sounds with the whole body-and-mind one understands them intimately. Intimate understanding is not like ordinary understanding. Ordinary understanding is seeing with the eye and hearing with the ear; intimacy is seeing with the ear and hearing with the eye. How do you see with the ear and hear with the eye? Let go of the eye, and the whole body-and-mind are nothing but the eye; let go of the ear, and the whole universe is nothing but the ear.” - Zen Master Dogen, Shobogenzo

“Six stream experiences is just a convenient raft. Nothing ultimate. Not only must you see that there is no Seer + seeing + seen... you must see the immense connectedness.” - John Tan, 2012

Dogen Total Exertion -- totality beyond whole and parts

Soh

This is a draft version from an upcoming book by John Tan. Will continued to be updated before final release.

Dogen Total Exertion -- totality beyond whole and parts

Total Exertion: The Whole in Every Part

Introduction: Seeing Dependent Arising in Action

In much of contemporary Buddhist discourse — especially within Tibetan traditions — pratītyasamutpāda, or dependent arising, is often approached primarily as a deconstructive view. It is skillfully wielded to dissolve the mistaken belief in intrinsic existence, pointing the mind toward emptiness. Its purpose is to clarify the non-arising nature of phenomena, to refine our understanding of śūnyatā, and to sever clinging to appearances as real.

While this analytical orientation is invaluable for dismantling substantialist assumptions, it also tends to leave dependent arising as something abstract or theoretical — a view to adopt, a logic to follow, a doctrine to internalize.

But what is rarely emphasized is how dependent arising is not merely a framework of negation, but also the very language and function of the world in action. In East Asian traditions such as Huayan and Dōgen's Zen, dependent arising is not only what deconstructs solidity, but what constructs the living immediacy of things. It is the formative, expressive, and radiant unfolding of reality in its full responsiveness.

Here, dependent arising is not something we merely analyze — it is something we witness, taste, and embody. Each moment, each phenomenon, each gesture is seen as the complete exertion of all conditions — not metaphorically, but functionally and luminously.

This chapter explores this dimension through the lens of Dōgen’s “Total Exertion” — a view where nothing exists on its own, and yet everything exists with utter immediacy and power. In this vision, the insight of emptiness does not erase the world, but reveals it to be seamlessly active, boundlessly intimate, and fully alive.

What follows is not a metaphysical theory, but an invitation to see and feel the radical interdependence of all things — not from the distance of conceptual analysis, but from the inside of living experience.

The Unfolding of the Whole in Each Thing

A bell rings — and in that single sound, the sky, the earth, the trees, and the listener all resound. It is not that the bell causes the world to respond. Rather, the world itself rings as the bell.

This is the meaning of total exertion: that in each moment, each phenomenon, each arising — the whole of interdependent existence is fully present, exerting itself as that appearance.

A grain of sand is not just part of a desert. It is the entire cosmos exerting itself in the form of a grain. A passing breeze is not merely moving air — it is the totality expressing itself as motion, temperature, sound, and touch. It is not that the breeze has meaning because of the sky or because of weather patterns. It has meaning because it cannot be anything apart from all that is.

This is not poetic exaggeration. It is a radical intimacy that becomes clear when the illusion of independently existing parts dissolves. When we no longer see the world as made of discrete, self-standing pieces, we realize: each thing is not merely in relation to the whole — it is a totality that transcends both whole and parts, in its current expression.

Just as in the previous example of left and right — where neither can be without the other, and both arise in a single conceptual movement — so too does each appearance arise not from itself, but from the exertion of all things.

This is not the unity of substance. It is the inseparability of display. It is not that all things collapse into one, but that all things arise as the living pattern of all others. Each part, therefore, is a holographic flash that presents infinity and totality — nothing excluded, nothing needing to be added.

To realize this is to live in suchness without leaving behind ordinary life. Walking is total exertion. Drinking tea is total exertion. Responding to a stranger’s gaze is total exertion. There is no center from which actions arise — they are the universe acting through and as you, yet without a ‘you’ apart from it.

Beyond Parts and Wholes

To speak of “parts” and “wholes” is already to enter the realm of conceptual division. We imagine a whole composed of smaller elements — a sum greater than its pieces — or we think of parts as fragments waiting to rejoin some unified source. But this thinking already presupposes something broken, something divided and in need of mending.

Total exertion cuts through this paradigm entirely.

It is not that the part belongs to a whole, nor that the whole contains the part. Rather, in the moment of its appearance, each so-called part is fully exerting the whole — not symbolically, but functionally and vividly.

When you raise a hand, this is not your hand acting alone. It is time, gravity, earth, breath, and sky — all exerting themselves as this gesture. There is no “hand” apart from all these. Nor is there a “whole” somewhere outside coordinating it. There is only this: the arising of this gesture as the complete manifestation of infinite conditions.

This is why Dōgen never said “wholeness is in everything,” but that each dharma-position is the total manifestation of the entire dharma realm. He was not pointing to a collective container but to the immediacy of a flower blooming as the exertion of ten thousand things.

The trap of substantialism lies in believing that parts must build up to a whole, or that wholes must somehow transcend parts. But both views assume that something real stands behind what appears.

Total exertion shows otherwise: there is no base behind what appears — appearance is the function of the base being absent. Emptiness is not a lack but a release from the need for any foundation. It is this very freedom that allows each phenomenon to shine fully, responsively, and luminously — without reduction, without residue.

When one sees through this, there is no longer any need to gather parts or preserve a whole. The sound of the bell, the opening of a door, the stillness between breaths — all are complete as they are, because they are everything, appearing just so.

The Time-Being of Total Function

Time is often mistaken as a backdrop — a neutral flow in which events occur, ticking forward moment by moment like beads on a string. But this is the view of time as a container, as something separate from what happens within it.

Dōgen overturns this with a startling insight: each thing is time, and each time is being. This is uji — the Time-Being. A mountain is not in time; the mountain is time. Your breath is not happening in a moment — it is that moment. A single thought, a bird in flight, the opening of a hand — each one is the full exertion of time as that event.

What appears as sequence — past, present, future — is not a movement across a line. It is the dynamic presence of all interdependencies exerting themselves now, as this appearance. The past exerts itself not from behind, but through this moment. The future does not lie ahead, but opens right here, as readiness. The present is not a dot between two unknowns, but the entire functioning of the ten directions as immediacy.

This insight liberates time from linearity and self from continuity. You do not persist through time — you are the total function of conditions arising now. There is no fixed self moving through changing time. There is only time-being, expressing as this movement, this thought, this silence.

Even what appears as delay, stagnation, or waiting is total function.

A still pond is not outside of time — it is time appearing as stillness.

A long pause in a conversation is not absence — it is the full flowering of mutual responsiveness without words.

When time is no longer seen as background but as full participation, each moment becomes infinitely alive, never repeated, never partial. Nothing is just “happening” — everything is acting. And this action is not your own, yet nothing can exclude you from it. You are time, just as the bell is time, the sky is time, and even this sentence is time fully being itself.

The Language of Dependent Arising in Action

When the Buddha spoke of dependent arising, he was not offering a theory of causation. He was revealing the nature of experience itself — fluid, co-arising, ungraspable — where nothing comes into being by itself, and nothing stands alone. In the light of total exertion, dependent arising is no longer seen as a passive structure of interrelation, but as the very voice of reality in motion.

Each thing appears because everything else exerts itself as that thing. A bell rings, not because of a sequence of isolated causes, but because the world is configured to ring now, as that moment. The hand does not reach because a mind commands it, but because the sky, gravity, flesh, memory, and breath all converge as reaching.

This is dependent arising as action — not the metaphysics of how things come to be, but the expressive nature of being itself. Every appearance is a functional articulation of the whole, not static or symbolic, but alive. Each word spoken, each leaf that falls, is not just caused — it is spoken by the whole web of reality.

This is why in the experience of total exertion, function and meaning arise simultaneously. You do not reflect and then act. You act, and in that movement, reflection is already present. You do not observe and then understand. You respond, and understanding dawns within that responsiveness.

The clarity of this is not found in abstraction, but in presence. When you listen deeply to the world — to a tone, a movement, a pause — you hear dependent arising not as a doctrine, but as the immediacy of luminous function. It is the bell ringing as your hearing. It is the path unfolding as your step. Nothing causes anything from outside. All is the self-exertion of interdependence appearing in real time.
This is the language of the world — not grammar or concept, but the way everything speaks everything else.

Total Responsiveness Without Self

In total exertion, there is action, there is clarity, there is seamless responsiveness — but there is no self behind any of it. There is no agent orchestrating the unfolding, no observer watching from behind the eyes. The world moves, and that movement includes you, but not as a fixed center — as a participatory openness.

The reflex to claim “I am doing” is strong. It arises from the habit of placing a self at the hub of experience. But in the lived insight of total exertion, there is only the doing, the arising, the manifesting — no one apart from it.

You speak, and speech comes from conditions far beyond your control: breath, language, context, emotion, and the sound of the other’s voice. You act, and action flows from hunger, wind, footsteps, memory, and mood. And yet, there is full presence, full clarity — not because you are controlling it, but because there is no separation to interfere.

This is not a loss of agency, but the liberation of responsiveness.

When the fiction of the independent self falls away, what remains is not passivity but intelligent, vivid response — unfiltered, unburdened, and natural. Like a mirror reflecting without effort, like a valley echoing a sound — the world expresses itself through your body-mind, yet nothing inside claims ownership.

This is why Dōgen said: “To study the self is to forget the self. To forget the self is to be verified by all things.” When the self is forgotten, all things shine — not as objects over there, but as this very intimacy of expression.

And so, when you bow, it is not you who bows. The entire world bows. When you listen, the whole sky listens. When you breathe, it is not your breath, but the breath of the universe exhaling just so.
This is the freedom of selfless function. It is the pathless path where walking, speaking, silence, and stillness are all acts of total exertion — complete, intimate, and without residue.

Interlude: Total Exertion in Science and Phenomenology

To appreciate the depth of Dōgen’s view, we may look across traditions. In physics, Ernst Mach famously proposed that inertia—the resistance of objects to acceleration—is not due to some intrinsic essence, but arises from the entire mass-energy configuration of the universe. This became known as Mach’s Principle: that every local event reflects the

total relational structure of the cosmos. The spinning of a star or the swing of a pendulum cannot be isolated from the whole.

Likewise, Dōgen’s “Total Exertion” declares: there is no such thing as an isolated event. Each thing is all things functioning in concert. When you lift a spoon, the whole universe lifts with you—not poetically, but functionally, relationally, and intimately.

In philosophy, Maurice Merleau-Ponty argued that perception is not the reception of pre-given data by a separate subject, but a lived intertwining of body and world. His notion of “flesh” (la chair)—neither mind nor matter—describes a shared medium where perceiver and perceived co-emerge. There is no gap between world and awareness; they are always already folded into one another.

This echoes Dōgen’s insight that the world and the practitioner are not two. To see, hear, and feel is not to stand apart from things but to participate in their arising. Each moment of perception is total exertion: the eye, light, object, intention, and conditions all functioning as one.

In both science and phenomenology, as in Dōgen’s Zen, we find a powerful overturning of the myth of isolation. Nothing arises alone. No action is autonomous. And no moment lacks the fullness of the all.
Labels: John Tan, Maha, Total Exertion, Zen Master Dogen |

“Also in between ”seeing the Ocean as extra” to directly experiencing the “total exertion in the ceaselessness of this ongoing activity”, a process of maturing the insight of anatta is necessary. By maturing I am referring to the ending of any reification of mind-objects be it "Self/self", "here/now", "mind", "body", "weather"... -- there is no "Self/self", only changing aggregates; no "body", only changing sensations; no “here and now” besides changing phenomena; no "weather" besides changing clouds, rain and sun shines. If this insight can be thoroughly extended to whatever arises then the interconnectedness and total exertion of this moment will become clear and obvious. So much so that when eating an apple, the universe tastes it! -- the full exertion of the apple, the hand, the taste, the throat, the stomach, the everything of everything is completely transcended into this simple action of suchness where nothing is excluded. Here again, do take note that this "total exertion" is not the result of being fully concentrated; it is the natural outcome when practitioners have adequately embraced the 'view' of 2 fold emptiness.” - John Tan, 2011, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/03/realization-experience-and-right-view_13.html

"Therefore the enlightened penetrates beyond forms, situations, conditions, all arbitrary opinions and communicates directly. 🙂 The simplest thing that is indivisibly whole, is no different from this breathe, this sound. A thousands years ago, a thousand years later and now, still, this breathe, this sound. Neither the same nor different, always so primordial." – John Tan, 2009

“Birth is just like riding in a boat. You raise the sails and you steer. Although you maneuver the sail and the pole, the boat gives you a ride, and without the boat you couldn’t ride. But you ride in the boat, and your riding makes the boat what

it is. Investigate a moment such as this. At just such a moment, there is nothing but the world of the boat. The sky, the water, and the shore are all the boat’s world, which is not the same as a world that is not the boat’s. Thus you make birth what it is; you make birth your birth. When you ride in a boat, your body, mind, and environs together are the undivided activity of the boat. The entire earth and the entire sky are both the undivided activity of the boat. Thus birth is nothing but you; you are nothing but birth.” - Dogen

“Life is, for example, like a time when a person is riding in a boat. In this boat, the person operates the sail; the person manages the rudder. Although the person rows with the oar, the boat gives the person person a ride and, other than the boat, there is no such person as a self. The person rides in the boat and the person makes this boat into a boat. We should make efforts to study this very moment. This very moment is nothing but the world of the boat. The sky, the water, and the shore; all of those become the time of the boat: it is not the same with the time of something else other than the boat. Therefore, we give birth to life; life makes us into ourselves.” - Dogen (Okumura, Shohaku. The Mountains and Waters Sutra: A Practitioner's Guide to Dogen's "Sansuikyo" (p. 74). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.)

“When riding in a boat, our body and mind, ourselves and the environment — all become the functioning of the boat. The entire earth and the entire space become the functioning of the boat.”

Okumura, Shohaku. The Mountains and Waters Sutra: A Practitioner's Guide to Dogen's "Sansuikyo" (pp. 73-74). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition.

“The universe is this arising thought.
The universe is this arising sound.
Just this magnificent arising!
Is Tao.
Homage to all arising.”
- John Tan, 2009

(+A)
When you cook, there is no self that cooks, only the activity of cooking. The hands moves, the utensils act, the water boils, the potatoes peels ...here there is no room for simplicity or complications, the “kitchen” went beyond its own imputation and dissolved into the activity of cooking and the universe is fully engaged in this cooking.
John Tan, 2013

“Wondrous! Marvelous!
The teachings of the insentient are inconceivable.
If you listen with the ears, you won't understand.
When you hear with the eyes, then you will know.” - Zen Master Dongshan

“When I talk about listening, I don’t mean just listening with the ear. Listening here includes the totality of perception—all senses open and alive, and still much more than that. The eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind are receptive, open, not controlled. A Zen saying describes it as “hearing with one’s eyes and seeing with one’s ears.” It refers to this wholeness of perception. The wholeness of being! Another Zen saying demands: “Hear the bell before it rings!” Ah, it doesn’t make any sense rationally, does it? But there is a moment when that bell is ringing before you know it! You may never know it! Your entire being is ringing! There’s no division in that—everything is ringing.”” - Toni Packer, The Wonder of Presence, excerpt from Finding a New Way to Listen

“Therefore To study the mind is to study the myriad forms. To study the myriad forms is to study the dependently originated appearance at this instantaneous moment. To study this instantaneous moment is to understand the full exertion of the 'interconnected universe' and this full exertion is expressed without reservation as this vivid moment of arising sound...this breath...this passing thought...this obviously clear scenery...

and

Instantly Gone!” - John Tan, 2011, https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2011/03/realization-experience-and-right-view_13.html

“And this is the whole purpose of anatta. To thoroughly see through that this background does not exist in actuality. What exists is a stream, action or karma. There is no doer or anything being done, there is only doing; No meditator nor meditation, only meditating. From a letting go perspective, "a watcher watching thought" will create the impression that a watcher is allowing thoughts to arise and subside while itself being unaffected. This is an illusion; it is 'holding' in disguise as 'letting go'. When we realized that there is no background from start, reality will present itself as one whole letting go. With practice, ‘intention’ dwindles with the maturing of insight and ‘doing’ will be gradually experienced as mere spontaneous happening as if universe is doing the work. With the some pointers from 'dependent origination', we can then penetrate further to see this happening as a sheer expression of everything interacting with everything coming into being. In fact, if we do not reify ‘universe’, it is just that -- an expression of interdependent arising that is just right wherever and whenever is.

Understanding this, practice is simply opening to whatever is.

For this mere happening is just right wherever and whenever is.
Though no place can be called home it is everywhere home.

When experience matures in the practice of great ease,
The experience is Maha! Great, miraculous and bliss.
In mundane activities of seeing, eating and tasting,
When expressed poetically is as if the entire universe meditating.

Whatever said and expressed are really all different flavors,
Of this everything of everything dependently originating,

As this moment of vivid shimmering.” - John Tan, 2009

“If we were to breathe in and out, in and out...till there is simply this entire sensation of breath, just breath as all causes and conditions coming into this moment of manifestation.

If we were to focus on the sensation of stepping, the sensation of hardness, just the sensation of the hardness, till there is simply this entire sensation ‘hardness’ when the feet touches the ground, just this ‘hardness’ as all causes and conditions coming into this moment of manifestation.

If we were to focus on hearing someone hitting a bell, the stick, the bell, the vibration of the air, the ears all coming together for this sensation of sound to arise, we will have Maha experience.

...

However ever since incorporating the teaching of dependent origination into non-dual presence, over the years it has become more ‘accessible’ but never has this been understood as a ground state. There seems to be a predictable relationship of seeing interdependent arising and emptiness on the experience of non-dual presence.

A week ago, the clear experience of Maha dawned and became quite effortless and at the same time there is a direct realization that it is also a natural state. In Sunyata, Maha is natural and must be fully factored into the path of experiencing whatever arises. Nevertheless Maha as a ground state requires the maturing of non-dual experience; we cannot feel entirely as the interconnectedness of everything coming spontaneously into being as this moment of vivid manifestation with a divided mind.” - John Tan, 2009

“In Maha, one does not feel self, one 'feels' universe; one does not feel 'Brahman' but feels 'interconnectedness'; one does not feel 'helplessness' due to 'dependence and interconnection' but feels great without boundary, spontaneous and marvelous.” - John Tan, 2009

“To say the universe is involved in this action as if differentiated entities is not exactly correct. Cause is neither same nor different from effect, like sun and rays. And in terms of yogic taste, it is more accurate to describe it in terms of “the universe is the action.”

When you breathe, is the air in the environment, the nose, or the lungs and diaphragm that is breathing? The universe is the breathing

...

Yes.. There is no “outside” to the infinitude of total exertion” - Soh, 2019

“Total exertion is direct realization of each manifest activity as arising with all conditions in seamless interdependency, where one feels that the whole universe is giving its best to make this moment possible.

I started having glimpses and insights into this about one or two years after my initial realisation of anatta (the direct realisation and penetration of the false dichotomy of subject-action-object through contemplating the verse in Bahiya Sutta) back in 2010. Anatta demolishes the background subject so that there is only the entirety of manifestation, and then you may penetrate further -- this entirety of manifestation is a seamless activity with no self-nature anywhere. When I experienced this I called it the "dharma body". When walking not only are the legs walking, the whole universe is walking, the whole universe is your body. To put it in laymen's term, it's like the universe as your body (but the word universe doesn't really capture the dynamic, interdependent and empty nature of it well).

Let me give you an example. Recently, I was sitting in meditation with my sister. Then as usual I entered into a blissful state. In that state, I saw that it's not me sitting here, like there is no I, no sister, no baby, etc, but it's really all these factors that is "meditating" plus much more... all the way back to the time of the Buddha! The living presence of Buddha and its sangha and the whole lineage is right here, same time and in communion. This breath is the universe. Suddenly some passages by Dogen made perfect sense*

Also, I just visited a Zen temple earlier today to meditate. Something that the novice monk said after the meditation struck me - chanting as "together action". He didn't elaborate what he meant by that but I intuited its meaning and purpose. To me what this means is this - when we practice as a community, we are enacting "together action" so that it is not you that is chanting but the chanting as a whole arising seamlessly that is chanting. But "together action" is in fact every moment! This breath is together action with all the conditions, the whole community and lineage. Carrying your meditation cushion and waiting for your turn to place that cushion back to its original place -- together action, not 'you' action.

Walking on the street, you look at the traffic and maneuver your way to reach your destination, the traffic and people walking are as much an inseparable part of the activity which you call 'your walking', each moment of walking is doing together action with all conditions. The same for driving a car. If you lose the "zone", if you get distracted and are not practicing "together action", watch out! Lives can be lost.

When you are walking in the park, the legs moving arise in tandem with the whole universe moving. The tree in front is manifesting the way it is in accord with all other conditions like the wind, light, the way I am moving and looking, etc. The tree has no tree-ness in itself or apart from me and I have no me-ness apart from the interplay that is manifesting the tree. When I see and interact with others, it's not I interacting with others as I and others are empty and dissolved in the interplay. Truly it is like a node of Indra reflecting all other nodes, each node is not other than all others nodes, there is neither self nor others.

'Self' and 'others' are learnt and is a result of the ignorance of our true nature. The structures of language or convention posits that when we encounter something it is always 'I' am touching/encountering a 'thing' as if there is a real subject interacting with an object. I am I and interacting or talking with a real other as discrete entities.

Although in actual experience it's just all conditions in total exertion but when spoken in language it appears separate. The structure of language is dualistic.. which is not a problem in itself when taken conventionally or as dependent designation but instead we wrongly reified them into things with its own existence in and of themselves.

*e.g.,

The Buddhas and Ancestors manifest before our very eyes whenever we respectfully serve the Buddhas and Ancestors by bringing Them up through our presenting of Their story. They are not limited simply to some past, present, or future time, for They have undoubtedly gone beyond even ‘going beyond Buddha’.

Shobogenzo, Busso, Hubert Nearman

The robe of the right transmission of the buddhas and patriarchs is not arbitrarily transmitted from buddha to buddha. It is the robe transmitted from the former buddha to the later buddha, and from the ancient buddha to the contemporaneous buddha. In order to transform the Way, to transform the buddha, and to transform the past, present, and future, there is a right transmission from past to present, from present to future, from present to past, from past to past, from present to present, from future to future, from future to present, and from future to past. It is the right transmission only between a buddha and a buddha.

- Dogen

“Yes, it is a word used by Dogen, ippo-gujin.

David Loy:

"...These techniques are used to exemplify his notion of ippo-gujin, 'the total exertion of a single dharma.' This key term embodies his dynamic understanding of interpenetration, according to which each dharma in the universe is both cause and effect of all other dharmas. This interfusion means that the life of one dharma becomes the life of all dharmas, so that (as Zen masters like to say), *this* is the only thing in the whole universe!"”

John Tan replied:

Wei Yu,

Well quoted, well written and well expressed! So much to my liking that I have to say something

.

Let’s visit our last discussion. As I said,

There is no self, only a sense of self.

No seer, only a sense of seer.

Therefore no conflict with your direct insight of anatta.

The SENSE of self is designated as “seer” that dependently originates when forms vividly appears due to the karmic tendencies of ignorance. Ascribing the phenomena “seen” to a non-existing seer, is the action, the act of seeing.

Ignorance is not "inability to know". Instead it is a very deep form inherent and dualistic knowing that sees in the karmic pattern of seer-seeing-seen.

Now the question:

Is there a need to exhaust this karmic pattern of seer-seeing-seen by pacifying conceptualization?

If so then the practice of anatta to empty clarity:

1. In seeing, just the seen. No seer.
2. In seeing, always only the seen. Therefore no seeing.
3. In the seen, just the seen.

Where is the seen?
Where is this vivid lurid scenery?
No where to be found,
Spontaneous, empty and non-arisen.

So how does total exertion step in?

If there is no need to exhaust karmic patterning, then how should you practice?

I (Soh) replied: The solidifying of what’s sensed into something truly there is a total exertion of karmic tendency, the appearance can seem very real but actually nothing real.

The sense of standing on this side as a seer is likewise itself the total exertion of karmic tendency, an activity and not an actual entity behind anything.

Seer and seen, grasper and grasped, liberated not through pacifying conceptualization but seeing the absence and total exertion of all afflicted and non afflicted phenomena.

John Tan:

Well said.

The self designated upon the aggregates was never there but felt to be solidly there.

"Here" that is so undeniably "here" is nothing "here". Only sensations and thoughts forming the impression of being “solidly here".

As for this:

"Seer and seen, grasper and grasped, liberated not through pacifying conceptualization but seeing the absence and total exertion of all afflicted and non afflicted phenomena."

Imo, buddhism non-dual is not the union of subject-object or seer is the seen but freedom from extremes.

It liberates seer from seer and seen from seen by seeing dependent arising.

Also,

The afflictive chain is released by the pacification of mental proliferation but not through dry non-conceptuality. Like what you said can be by:

1. Direct insight of anatta into empty clarity.

2. Total exertion.
However in total exertion, doing away with self is not necessary. It is fully embraced and fully authenticated by 10 thousand things. Most of your articles seem quite persistent in trying to get rid of “self” even when expressing total exertion. In total exertion, emptiness and endless dependencies of dharma (including self) are a given otherwise total exertion is not possible. Every dharma is purified by its own endless dependencies.

Your expression of timelessness of total exertion is precious. The moment Dogen writes and the moment you realise is one exertion. Transmission is indeed heart to heart, timeless and intimate!

And

3. Persistently seeing of whatever arises dependently is free from extremes will eventually free the mind. Consistently seeing neither self nor no-self, neither arise nor not-arise, breaks the chain of mental proliferation.

Self and the ten thousand things,
Neither one nor many.
Not one, therefore no self nature.
Not two, therefore seamless.
One line of reasoning,
freedom from 2 extremes.
Dependent arising is the king of reasoning.” - Soh, 2017

“While walking in the Singapore botanic gardens just now, the total exertion of universe walking, then the total exertion of a single thought is experienced, and the analogy arose - even a repetitive "discursive" thought is Maha total exertion, like the echo is the echo of the universe, but that thought is the echo of the three times. Of course at that point those are not discursive thoughts.” - Soh, 2019

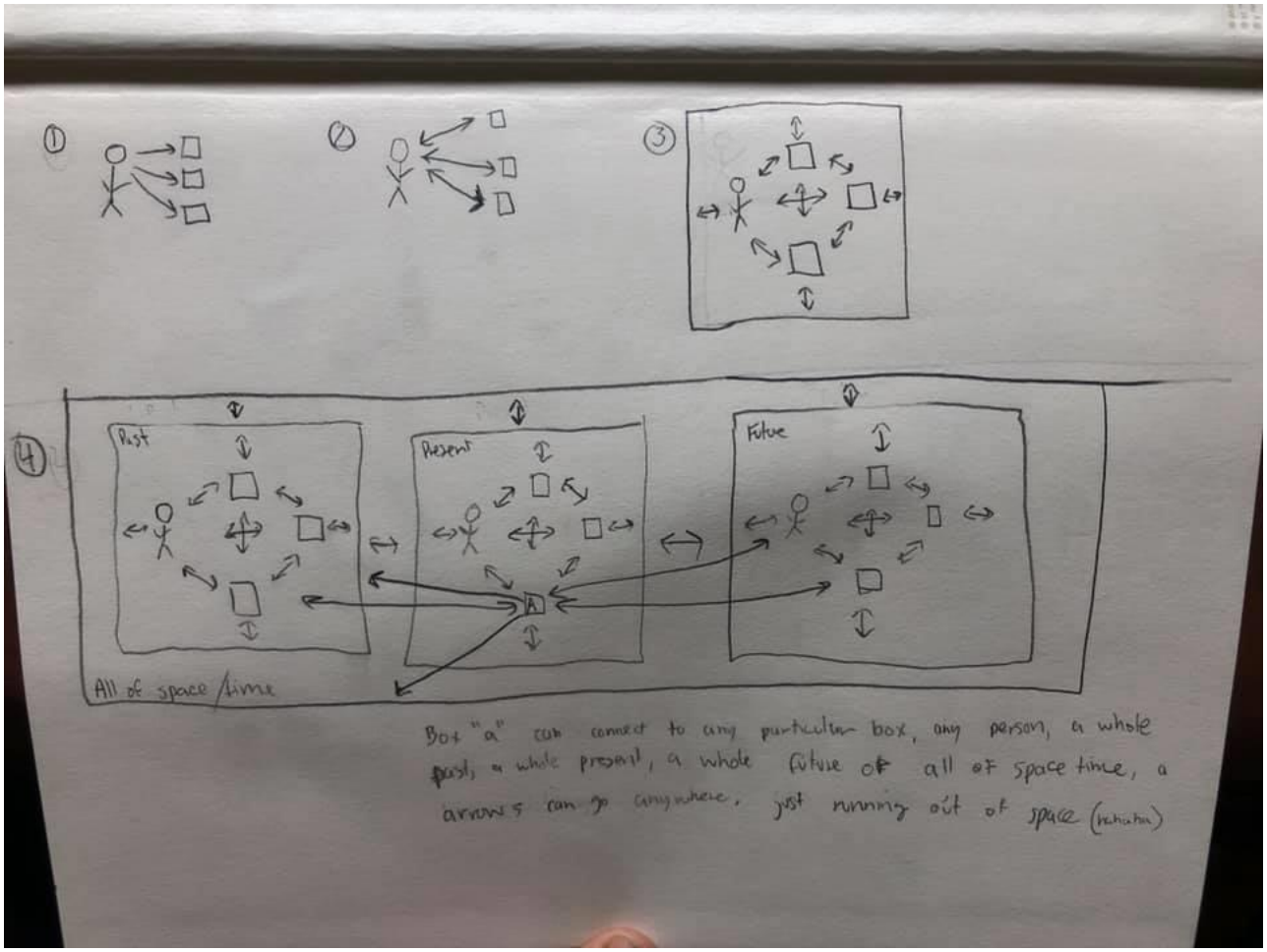
“Now Appearing: Everything, EveryWhere, and EveryWhen. Ta-Da

In addition to the paradigm-shifting realization that there was no separate me to carry around containers called 'memories', 'hurts', 'accomplishments', or 'regrets, there were two more shifts I wanted to tell you about, dear reader. Why do I feel the need to document it? I'm not certain. It feels like it's time to let folks know what's happened here, especially those seekers who've come to me for pointers on anatta realization. I mean, this whole business of guiding people, whether for money or on a volunteer basis, is just pretty weird when viewed from a conventional perspective. Where are the credentials? At any rate, I'll tell you about a second shift. It had everything to do with the Bahiya Sutta and contemplation of each line. I'd been reading Soh Wei Yu's AwakeningtoReality blog and followed a rabbit trail of links to Alex Weith's journal on his own progress in working with the sutta. (I've since been unable to find the journal). In addition, I'd continued reading on in Wei Yu's blog, especially the sections where he'd gotten into ideas about realizing emptiness and interdependence.... although at the time I didn't realize it was called emptiness.

The story: Relaxing by the side of a pool, I read and contemplated for hours, then glanced up to notice a snail sitting on the very edge of the lip, the place where water in motion rolls into a very sudden interruption, causing a wave. The snail seemed, in my mind anyway, to be struggling against what must have seemed like a relentless series of tsunamis. He teetered on the edge, each moment threatening to send him into the depths. (that's three feet of water to you and me). When I looked across to pool to find the source of this epic disturbance, I saw a woman sporting a sublime but bright smile brought about from basking in the glow of Sunshine and Saturdays. Despite her generous size, she appeared to delicately occupy her perch at the deep end. Thoroughly enjoy her afternoon, she lazily and delicately swished her feet back and forth, then sighed. It was then that the thunder of interdependence struck. Like some sort of special effects movie, I 'saw', all at once, the woman, the water, the sun, the breeze, the weather, her parents, her

grandparents and ancestors, the earth, the universe. And from the other end of the spectrum there was the snail, his ever-growing shell, and every movement that had led him to the moment of finding himself at his poolside ledge. Then there was the pool, the workers who'd constructed it, the water which filled it, and the rain and evaporation that moved the water. Everywhere I looked, Everything appeared. For lack of a better way to express this, what I saw could be expressed as a complete and whole view of anything at all that ever existed. Not only that, but that it had to exist PRECISELY as it had in order for this very moment to be as it was. Ta-Da. It would increasingly come to me that this is seen not just in that moment, but all the time, everywhere, and in every 'thing'. Total exertion, and I do mean Total, is what This is. The simultaneous complexity and simplicity of this is absolutely mind blowing in the best sort of sense. What's more, it's not static and not inherent. It's what it appears to be right now, but not a thing there at all. Forget the nihilistic teachings that say there are no things for a second and just look at the experience of what appears. The Total Exertion still applies. That this blog post is being typed is It. The whole shebang. It's the appearance that contains the appearances of 'my entire history' which includes the history of existence. That it's being read by a you is the whole thing too. Everything that is normally thought of as "YOU" is right here. This also means that EveryWhen and EveryWhere is appearing too. Very much like examining a fractal, zoom in at any point, and it's All there. Amazing, isn't it?” - Delma McConnell, 2014

“Total exertion is not a zone state as many misrepresented. It is a very deep shift in perception from realization post anatta. It is not of effort. However before that it is advisable to have a technique to focus quality time on the state of no-mind for an initial taste.” - John Tan, 2019


1
2
3
4
Past
Present
Future
All of space/time
But "a" can connect to any particular box, any person, a whole past, a whole present, a whole future of all of space time, a arrows can go anywhere, just running out of space (infinite)

- Hale Oh

“Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren I have a couple of classes in a row here where I have to pay attention lol... will explain in a few hours
1

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Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren The diagram is a progress seeing of our relationship to the world. "a" is not "a", therefore "a" is "a" applied out.

The stick figure is a person, the small boxes are any/all dharmas, the arrows and lines show relationship, the big box in #3 is a representation of the whole world/universe, the huge box in #4 is all space time.

#1 is how most people see. They are outsiders looking in.

#2 is a beginning to see an interrelationship between you and the world. Without me, the flower would not be there, with the flower, I would not be here. This world makes me, and I make this world. The arrows point back and forth to show a mutual relationship.

#3 brings in a larger context, its seeing the wholeness of this moment. Not only am I and the world co created, but each and everything exists together like a web. Everything moving together in harmony, nothing separate... Not only #2 but also a more whole picture of the present moment. This whole moment is one seamless happening. Each piece, including you, is integral to the whole, and the whole is integral to each piece. A car (a) is nothing without a road to drive on, a person to drive, an earth etc (not a). But, this is looked at and seen in the moment and felt.

#4 is taking #3 and applying time. Each point is the "crux" or "fulcrum" of space time. Everything "hinges" so to speak on the bell ringing. Each "a" is empty (not a) because it only exists in context with all space time. Therefore, "a" is just "a" haha, which is all things all places all times. And all that is just "a". It's seeing the wholeness of each and every thing, indra's net real time. But this is just intellectual here, this is something that you feel.

A lot of this is about seeing context and relationship imo. The outline has good advice for incorporating view and particular practices to see this. The diamond sutra is also a good source for contemplation if interested. This link was particularly helpful for a friend of mine...

https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/c33e/bb82836e30c37d5439af2a20042f05affcc2.pdf
2

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Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren Checking out Huayan, Li and Shi, interpenetration and mutual containment and non obstruction might be interesting for view. Also, quite funnily, their fourfold dharmadhatu is very similar, I feel, to the drawing. A lot of this draws from flower garland sutra.

This is interesting too..

https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Miscellaneous/Treatise_on_Golden_Lion.html
thezensite:Fazang's Treatise on the Golden Lion
thezensite.com
thezensite:Fazang's Treatise on...
thezensite:Fazang's Treatise on the Golden Lion
2

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Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren But all of the words can be a source of confusion. Better to see and feel haha.

Like
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Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren Oh and ted biringers book called “zen cosmology”

Like
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André A. Pais
André A. Pais Hale, from the Golden Lion link. It's interesting...

6. To discuss the five doctrines. The first: although the lion is a dharma produced through dependent-arising, it undergoes generation and destruction in each and every moment. [Since nothing in the phenomenal world endures,] no form of the lion can ever be found. This is called the teaching for the ignorant Śrāvakas [Hīnayāna].

The second: all things, being the product of dependent-arising, are devoid of Selfhood [Svabhāva], and in the final analysis, are nothing but Emptiness. This is called the preliminary teaching of Mahāyāna.

The third: although all things are Emptiness through and through, this does not impede the vivid appearance of the Māyā/becoming. All that which is of dependent-arising is fictitiously existent [and therefore it is truly void.] This co-existence of both being and non-being is called the final teaching of Mahāyāna.

The fourth: inasmuch as these two characters [that of Emptiness and that of form] mutually annul each other, they are both abolished. Here, no imaginings or false presuppositions exist; neither the concept of Emptiness nor the idea of existence retains any influence. [This is the sphere in which] the ideas of both being and non-being vanish. It is a realm that names and speech cannot reach. Here the mind rests without any attachment. This is called the instantaneous teaching of Mahāyāna.

The fifth: when all false feelings and wrong ideas are eliminated, and the true substance is revealed, everything becomes merged into one great mass. Great functions then arise in abundance, and whatever arises is absolutely true. The myriad manifestations, despite their variety, interpenetrate without confusion or disarray. The all is the one, for both are empty in substance. The one is the all, for cause and effect clearly manifest themselves [without fail]. In their power and

functions [the one and the all] embrace each other. They spread out and roll up in utter freedom. This is called the Round Doctrine of the One Vehicle.

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Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren André, and all the rest of what he has to say haha. Fazang is on to something...

Like
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Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren
🌈🌈🌈

Like
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André A. Pais
André A. Pais Hale Oh had never read anything from this sect... 😊

Like
· Reply · 1y

Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren "The name Flower Garland is meant to suggest the crowning glory of a Buddha's profound understanding of ultimate reality."
1

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André A. Pais
André A. Pais Hale Oh I'm reading the article on the diamond sutra. I enjoyed the Golden Lion, although it can lend itself to substantialist readings. Must re-read it.

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Hale OHerren
Hale OHerren Ya gotta read everything with a grain of salt. I like looking bigger picture, especially if it's a translation.

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John Tan André, for the metta question it is not for altruistic reasons but rather to further open up oneself into total exertion.

Post anatta, one can access to the state of no mind easily and this state of no mind is "key" to opening up new dimension of the mind where experience turn maha, immense and great.

If possible, it is advisable to integrate a practice, be it yoga, pranayama or qi gong or vipassana or chanting where you can focus your attention into an oceanic state of no-mind as if everything in the 10 directions and 3 times are all into a single action.

Don't worry too much whether is it realistic, just don't place any limitation in the expansion in this practice. Just open up and connect as is presented in Hale's badly drawn diagram.😂
9

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  André A. Pais John Tan tks for your explanation. Why the need to integrate it with another practice, like chanting? And what kind of chanting? But do you mean something more physical?

- □

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Hale OHerren André A. Pais I like drumming and chanting. Makes sense that some of the services at eihei-ji go on for over 2 hours.

-

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John Tan André, choosing a practice is important for stability much like shamatha so that one can better integrate the body-mind into a stable state of evenness over a quality period of time. The state no mind from anatta in daily activity is a mini scale of the oceanic opening unless one has overcome our dualistic and inherent karmic tendencies sufficiently.
1

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Soh Wei Yu Any kind of chanting... there are also practices in dzogchen called singing song of vajra. But it depends on what lineage, tradition, practices, chants, all are good if you actualize total exertion.

I wrote about some sutra chanting in Korean leading to total exertion in
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../what-is-total...

Even chanting 'A' can be Maha total exertion.

https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/.../no-yellow...

Zen Master Bernie Glassman:

Some people say it's not necessary to read the Heart Sutra in its English translation, that the essence of this Wisdom literature can be achieved by just chanting it in the original Sanskrit. Before I review the meaning of the title, let me say that when you truly just chant the Heart Sutra, all of it is contained in the act of just chanting. When we chant in such a way that nothing else is happening, that all our concentration, all our mental and physical energies are condensed into just being the sound A (the first syllable of the original text, from "Avalokitesvara"), that is all that exists. Just A! Just the elimination of any trace of separation between subject and object, which is nothing but our zazen itself. If we put all our energy into just chanting in this manner, there is no separation, and that state of no separation is the state of sunyata, or "emptiness," or what I also call not-knowing. That is the state of 100 percent action; everything is fully concentrated in this very moment. This is the heart of our practice, to be totally in this moment, moment after moment. It doesn't matter what words are being chanted; when you are totally A, it is not even A anymore; it is the whole universe, it is everything.

□

awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com

What is Total Exertion?

What is Total Exertion?

1

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Soh Wei Yu Personally I focus more on breathing meditation and yoga but it depends on individual

- □

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Hale OHerren Chant and drum like this guy haha. I imagine he knows whats up... There is this shamanic feel to it. This power of creation and connection. Will write more thoughts in a bit...

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John Tan Yes. Breathing exercise is a good practice. Breathe into no-mind, just the inhalation and exhalation. Allow the whole body to fully engaged in the breath - the nose, the lung, the abdominal, the intestine are all fully participating in the breath. Extend beyond the boundary of the body into the air, the trees, the plants, the universe. See whether you can get all the masters of the 3 times to participate together into this moment of breathing (hale's diagram). 😝

1

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Peter Wang Soh Wei Yu Ah so that's what total exertion is. It's the flow state or "being in the zone". To be one with the very activity that's being done.

1

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Hale OHerren I was lucky enough to visit Eiheiji and go to one of their morning services. This powerful ritual. They have these forever resonating bells, this massive super deep drum that keeps the beat. Those sounds fully captures your whole body. Then the chanting, if you use your whole body, your whole body vibrates with your voice. Your voice harmonizes with all the other voices. Total transcendence. Plus, with the fact that they have been chanting these old chants like that every morning for the past 700+ years...

And then add in the fact that you do it every morning; there's this cyclical inclusion/reminder/feeling that brings in all time. Like born here in ringing this bell is every time you've rung the bell before and, everyone who rang the bell before you, all the dharma practice that fostered bell ringing, all the masters of the past, the whole universe. It's a powerful expression of literally all space and time. And, flowing out the other direction, your bell ringing echoes out into eternity. Your ringing is turned by the wheel of the dharma and reciprocally, your ringing turns the wheel of the dharma.

Heart Sutra at Sojji (included so you can see these ancient, dark & powerful visuals... the robes, the colors, the decorations the lighting etc.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=De15EaR_irk&t=147s

Heart Sutra at Eiheiji starts at 6:00ish (no video)... If you listen, listen with something that can play bass to hear/feel the drum.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TnPMZW63uPw

youtube.com
Soto Zen - Heart Sutra /...
Soto Zen - Heart Sutra / 曹洞宗大本山總持寺 - 般若波羅蜜多心經
3

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John Tan Peter, it is not exactly a flow state.

-

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Peter Wang oh lol

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John Tan Peter, it may appear to be and sound so and many translate it that way but it is not.

Like what Hale has described, it is a very deep feeling of being "connected". I think Hale described very well "this connection".

1

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Hale OHerren Thanks John, I'll write some more stuff once I get out of this last class.

1

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Tyler Jones André A. Pais, when this group first became active again I asked if you were aware of John's advice on meditation post anatta and you said no. What he shared here is what I was referring to.

1

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"When just one person does zazen even one time, he becomes, imperceptibly, one with each and all of the myriad things and permeates completely all time, so that, within the limitless universe, throughout past, future, and present, he is performing the eternal and ceaseless work of guiding beings to enlightenment."
- Dogen, "Bendowa"

At this time, everything in the Universe in the ten directions - soil, earth, grass, and trees; fences, walls, tiles and pebbles - perform the Buddha’s work... The grass, trees, soil, earth reached by this guiding influence all radiate great brightness, and their preaching of the deep and fine dharma is without end.
~ Zen Master Dogen

“...In the main story, a young man was a student of Master Gutei. This student didn't seem to realize what he was learning or practicing. Dogen comments, "a boy who attended Master Gutei (Judi), without noticing when he was learning or when he was practicing, realized the Way because he served as a personal attendant to the master who had been practicing for a long time." In the course of attending to Master Gutei, he attained realization.

By focusing on the activity of helping Master Gutei every day, the student was not aware he was being trained. He probably spent his time making the master's bed and fetching tea. Yet those activities, in accord with Master Gutei's instruction, created his passage from student to master. This transformation was due to the confluence of all the activities: all the befores and afters and the independent moments of the student's life with the master. His interactions with Master Gutei resulted in his total immersion in practice-realization. Transformation was always present, yet there was a particular moment of its recognition when Master Gutei acknowledged his passage into spiritual maturity.

Another example is found in "Udonge" (The Udumbara Flower). Dogen explains the awakening of Buddha's disciple Mahakasyapa. Buddha holds up a flower. Mahakasyapa, seeing the flower, smiles. The moment of Buddha-flower-smile is passageless-passage. Dogen describes it this way:

'All instances, however many, of the twirling of flowers, are individual instances of [the transmission from] rightful successor to rightful successor; they are the actual existence of the transmission. Indeed, forget the World-Honored One's twirling of a flower!... Because the time of twirling of flowers is the whole of Time itself, it is the experience of the same state as the World-Honored One, and it is the same twirling of flowers. The meaning of 'twirling flowers' is flowers displaying flowers [phenomena manifesting themselves as they are]: it is plum flowers, spring flowers, snow flowers, and lotus flowers.'

Furthermore,

'Twirling flowers are twirled by eyes, twirled by mind-consciousnesss, twirled by nostrils, and twirled by flowers twirling. In general, the mountains, rivers, and the Earth; the sun and moon, the wind and rain, people, animals, grass, and trees - the miscellaneous things of the present displaying themselves here and there - are just the twirling of the udumbara flower.'

Just one flower being held up for display is passage through all time and being, awakening each and every thing. This is what Mahakasyapa realized. Essentially his realization was already present as his own being, yet it was the passage of all buddha-nature in and through him that revealed his true nature. This is our passage too.” - Being-Time by Shinshu Roberts

"Modern "mindfulness" meditation is just sitting quietly, following the breath, accepting the moment, being mindful of what's happening in the moment. That's all good, and it is helpful to many. However, people sometimes call that "Shikantaza" these days, and even some teachers make the mistake. I cannot agree that such languid sitting is what Master Dogen meant as "Shikantaza."

Shikantaza in Dogen's expression is a way that sits as all timeless time and every atom of space sitting in our sitting, "dropping body-mind," dropping the self/other divide while still in this life and world of self and other and passing time. This sitting embodies the Wholeness that is Emptiness, in which our very sitting is Buddha sitting.

One sits vibrantly, with sincerity and dedication ... yet there is nothing to attain. One is unentangled, though in life's tangled circumstances. One sits, in radical equanimity, letting thoughts go, not running toward yet not running away from thoughts. One comes to see the Light of Clarity and Wholeness which shines through both thoughts and no thoughts. One sits for a time, free of measures of time. Sitting sits sitting for sitting's sake. Sitting is the fruition of all of life in that moment of sitting.

Shikantaza is a Gateless Gateway to Liberation, not mere relaxation, accumulation, recreation or remuneration. 😊

It is too easy to confuse "mindfulness" and "Shikantaza.""

- Zen Master Jundo Cohen

“Yes, it is a word used by Dogen, ippo-gujin.

David Loy:

"...These techniques are used to exemplify his notion of ippo-gujin, 'the total exertion of a single dharma.' This key term embodies his dynamic understanding of interpenetration, according to which each dharma in the universe is both

cause and effect of all other dharmas. This interfusion means that the life of one dharma becomes the life of all dharmas, so that (as Zen masters like to say), *this* is the only thing in the whole universe!"" - Soh, 2017

“Room is hot, whole body is the burning! □□Feel it, live it without second thought.” - Soh, 2015

“Dogen Zenji continues, saying: Seeing each thing in this entire world as a moment of time . See each thing as a moment of time: each thing or each being, just a moment. I think this is related with the practice of Avalokiteshvara, or Kanjizai, as we say in the Sino-Japanese pronunciation: the one who hears the world. And there we have to be aware of Mumon's words in one of the poems of the Mumonkan, when he says:

If you listen with your ear, it's hard to understand
If you hear with your eye, you are intimate at last

Seeing with the eyes is good, but not enough. You have to hear with your eyes and see with your ears.

So the one that hears the sounds of the world is not merely concerned with hearing, but with total function of our whole body-and-mind, involving all of our senses and, of course, involving completely our own body. This is the quality of true zazen, seeing each thing as a moment of time, just a moment, with no continuity at all. Just a moment, with no trace remaining. Of course, when Dogen says “seeing it”, he means ‘being completely intimate with’. At that point he says time is not really time; time itself is being, and all being is time.”

- http://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeac.../augusto/TimeBeing_1.htm

"It is good you are seeing the fabrications working together to shape a dualistic experience. That is seeing the afflictive dependent origination, seeing that selfing-activity, duality, grasping as the very activity that dependently originates. Therefore there is no self/Self/agent, but there is the afflictive sense of self, grasping and reification in action. There is no actor but there is action, be it afflictive or non-afflictive.. it is not an agent giving rise to afflictive activities but afflictive activities giving rise to selfing through dependent arising

As for total exertion and maha, that is more on the non-afflictive side of dependent origination, the general principle of dependent origination. You will see that the +A expressions are all over in Dogen's writings, whereas the Mahamudra/Tibetan tends to emphasize more on -A. (Update: There are always exceptions, such as Elias Capriles from Dzogchen tradition expressing Maha total exertion: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/06/elias-caprilles-interviewed-by-vladimir.html, and Zen Master Hong Wen Liang (洪文亮禅师) integrating total exertion with illusoriness in some of his expressions)

I started having mini glimpses of total exertionas early as 2011 but only had very clear experiences of it beginning in 2013 where I wrote about dharma body - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2013/09/dharma-body_7.html --

where even the walking activity is as immense and boundless as the whole universe, a seamless activity of mind-body-universe.

John Tan used the word Maha and Total Exertion to describe this, it is about totality. Maha means great, but it is not big vs small, but great without boundaries. Immense as the universe. As he often said, be light as feather but immense as the universe.

Nowadays the infinitude of maha total exertion has become a natural, effortless state as an ongoing experience. When you are doubtless and stabilized anatta, you must mature your insight and experience in this direction.

That Maha total exertion must become a natural state, as written in https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html -

"A week ago, the clear experience of Maha dawned and became quite effortless and at the same time there is a direct realization that it is also a natural state. In Sunyata, Maha is natural and must be fully factored into the path of experiencing whatever arises. Nevertheless Maha as a ground state requires the maturing of non-dual experience; we cannot feel entirely as the interconnectedness of everything coming spontaneously into being as this moment of vivid manifestation with a divided mind.

The universe is this arising thought.
The universe is this arising sound.
Just this magnificent arising!
Is Tao.
Homage to all arising."

“(10:58 PM) AEN: "With going the boundless sky goes, with coming the entire earth comes. This is everyday mind." - Dogen

(10:59 PM) Thusness: wow... maha. this is experiencing maha in mundane activities.” - 2009

Soh: “Even if you see the Actual Freedom teachings, there are two stages of actual freedom.

1) The basic, newly-free actual freedom is characterized by the lack of separative identity, feeling-being, magical and wonderful luminosity as actual time and form,

"On the woven table mat my attention was drawn to a dark blue plastic cigarette lighter, an empty glass, a tobacco pouch and other sundry items. All of a sudden, Richard’s phrase “the actual world of people, things and events” came to mind and I found myself acknowledging that the things on the table existed in actuality, i.e. did in fact actually exist, and this being the case, here I was waving my hand in front of “people”, in this case Richard, saying that I experienced him as if behind a veil, i.e. not actually existing. It took only a few more seconds of switching my attention from the

things on the table and my waving hand for the whole illusion of a separating veil to collapse – along with my illusory self-centred identity as I was gradually becoming aware of.

The whole experience was like a seamless transition between two worlds – from being a feeling being trapped within an illusionary all-encompassing self-created and sustained bubble to being here in the actual world. There was no dramatic end for ‘me’, no death-like traumatic experience, no prior psychic events or escapades, no “wall of fear”, no “abyss” – rather there was a profound experience of sweetness, a ready acknowledgement of my destiny and a final understanding that the feeling of separateness was nothing other than an illusion of ‘my’ own making." - Peter

"There was no fear, no experience of death, no physical phenomena or changes, just the realization that I have always been here in this eternal moment in time, in this luminous magical world, more naked than I was born and utterly safe... ...The next morning was the real test – I half-expected that I had reverted back to normal but the world was just as brilliant, beneficial and wunderbar as I had experienced it the night before. I am still surprised how easy it all turned out to be in the end." - Vineeto

This is why I asked how thorough are you experiencing the 2nd stanza.. as well as the intensity of luminosity as vivid form, this is important as well in addition for the aspect of no agent. But from what you messaged me it you are already experiencing that aspect well at the moment.

2) The Fully Free actual freedom characterized by permanent experience of infinitude [not just glimpses] that comes soon after the loss of social identity (from what I understand from that website, that includes views, impinging on what actions to take and interpretations of one's pure experience including of that infinitude, sometimes subtly interpreting it wrongly or in terms of metaphysical essence based on the convo of Vineeto with a newly-free person) - to me what I see as more crucial is that the view aspect must be clear. This is also related to the example of the video by Leo on Actualized.org describes the Maha Total Exertion glimpses in 5-Meo-DMT trip, but he is still having view of inherent existence, and misinterpreting that infinitude in terms of metaphysicality in the same way that Vineeto discussed with another guy. With that social identity or 'shadow being' in place, it prevents the permanent experience of infinitude.

But that is how AF expresses or interpretes. For you, you just need to be clear on anatta and D.O., that will lead to effortless Maha/total exertion. There must not be a desync of view and experience, otherwise it will be a hindrance.

But the progression is quite similar -- means anatta in two stanza stabilized, then glimpses of maha total exertion, then a shift into permanent total exertion. But AF lacks emptiness.

As John Tan wrote previously, “Richard's experience is not different from total exertion. However his actual view will be restricting him imo.”

Another time in 2019, John Tan said, “AF is no different from affirmative negation. Firmly grounded in the actual

world of PCE. There is deconstruction but the very insight that deconstruct is not clear. It is focused on PCE and the cause of deconstruction is not known. Focused on experience more than insights.”

Back in 2015, John Tan said, “John TanFriday, March 20, 2015 at 10:24am UTC+08

The way you described has a lot of over emphasis, there is a lack of intensity but expressed as if you have realized and experienced the intensity of these insights and experiences...lol. You have to reverse the cycle of experiences and you stabilize both your insights and experiences. Even in AF *(Actual Freedom teachings)*, there is such intensity. When practitioners expressed something like the universe doing the washing of the plates, they are having that experiences... not just to sound nice. In a simple breathing process, one too undergo deconstruction process to later end up in maha and total exertion. Like in experience, you say you become just the breathing and the universe is inhaling... conceptually you understand after anatta but the intensity isn't there.

For example I tell you to breathe in slowly and deeply for focus in placing your intention on the lower dantian to the chest and to the fingertip. Just this process, how do you enter into anatta and a state of total exertion? I mean a state of no-mind and into total exertion. You say that you think you can breathe in slowly and deeply but I can tell just this is enough for you to learn for sometime. To fully understand the whole mechanics, the whole DO into the seamless act of the pose -- the whole movement of breathing into the fingertip.

In energy practice you go by the "feel" and "taste", fully engaged and involved into it without discursive thoughts, the whole movement learning itself from moment to moment. But if you analyse, you will see the process of deconstructions - the chest, the air movement, the stomach, the tailbone, the tightening of the muscles of your abdomen, the holding of your breath at your lung ... how you can deconstruct these into the seamless activity of breathing into your finger tip. If you go through the process of deconstruction, you too can get into the direct taste of maha and total exertion but it involves the conceptual mind until all these different events and related activity are deconstructed into a seamless flow. Though it involves the conceptual mind, your intellect is clear and knows exactly where the hindrances are... why the breath cannot flow smoothly ...

So when I asked you can you breathe in slowly and deeply for those simple poses... you told me you think so... Immediately I know there is still a long way for you to go... lol”

.....

As Vineeto (who has become almost like a successor or Richard at the moment, being the first fully free person besides Richard himself, and I think is currently living with Richard) wrote:

VINEETO: Yes, the definite moment of becoming fully free happened on October 12, 2010.

And yes, "the experiences and investigation around those interactions constituted the bulk of the ‘many more things’."

To refresh my memory I checked what I wrote to Tarin in November 2010 about this period after the abdication of the guardian –

[Vineeto]: Frequent interactions with Richard quite often resulted in glimpses of a greater depth to an actual freedom and at the time I called them windows into purity. Both Richard and I had noticed that when I described how I experienced myself, words such as the ‘immaculate purity’ and ‘pristine limpidness’ where not part of my vocabulary and, except for a few occasional glimpses, neither did I mention in my description experiencing the infinitude of this spatially infinite, temporally eternal and perpetually forming and changing universe, whereas Richard has described his experience of an actual freedom in such glowing terms like in one of my favourite excerpts from his journal –

[Richard]: "There is something precious in living itself. Something beyond compare. Something more valuable than any "King’s ransom". It is not rare gemstones; it is not singular works of art; it is not the much-prized bags of money; it is not the treasured loving relationships; it is not the highly esteemed Blissful States Of ‘Being’ ... ... it is not any of these things usually considered precious. There is something ultimately precious. It is the essential character of the infinitude of the universe ... which is the life-giving foundation of all that is apparent. That something precious is me as-I-am ... me as I actually am as distinct from ‘me’ as ‘I’ really am. I am the universe’s experience of itself. The limpid and lucid perfection and purity of being here now, as-I-am, is akin to the crystalline perfection and purity seen in a dew-drop hanging from the tip of a leaf in the early-morning sunshine; the sunrise strikes the transparent dew-drop with its warming rays, highlighting the flawless correctness of the tear-drop shape with its bellied form. One is left almost breathless with wonder at the immaculate simplicity so exemplified ... and everyone I have spoken with has experienced this impeccable purity and perfection in some way or another at varying stages in their life. Is it not impossible to conceive – and just too difficult to imagine – that this is one’s essential character? One has to be daring enough to live it ... for it is both one’s audacious birth-right and adventurous destiny.

When one lives the magical perfection of this purity twenty-four-hours-a-day; when one has ceased being ‘I’ and is being genuine, one can see clearly that there is no separation between me and that something which is precious. The purity of life emerges from the perfection that wells up constantly due to an immense stillness which is utterly immense in its scope and magnitude. This stillness of infinitude is that something which is precious. It is the life-giving foundation of all that is apparent. This stillness happens as me. This stillness is my essential disposition, for it is the principle character, the intrinsic basis of everything. It is this universe at its genesis. It is not, as it might commonly be supposed, at the centre of everything ... there is no centre here. This stillness, which is everywhere all at once, is the be all and end all of life itself. I am the universe experiencing itself as a sensate, reflective human being." Richard’s Journal, 1997, Article Twenty-five

In the early months of this year [2010] I had plenty of opportunity to read Richard’s words describing the outstanding quality of an actual freedom while I was updating the website, replacing all footnotes with the new format of tool-tips and I became starkly aware of the vast gap of experiencing between his descriptions and my own experience of myself and the world around me."

After the abdication of the guardian I was one day ready to allow myself to fully (and permanently) experience the spatial infinitude of the universe. Here is the description of what happened –

[Vineeto]: "The next significant event happened a week after my completion [the abdication of the guardian]. It began with an eerie sensation in the head as if my brain was being operated on whilst being fully conscious. After about 15 minutes or so there was a sensation as if my brain was being scattered throughout the universe. When I recovered from the experience itself enough to find out what actually happened, I noticed that I had lost my centre of reference (a discovery that left me quite disconcerted for about 2 weeks). Richard reported that in the days before he was able to existentially sense me as being close, very close, right in front of his eyes, so to speak, but that after this event he has been no longer able to sense me existentially. The direct result of losing the boundaries of my localized reference during this ‘brain-scattering’ event is that I am permanently apperceptively aware of the infinitude of the universe as infinite space, eternal time and perpetual matter." Private letter to Tarin, November 29, 2010

I remember a similar profound disorientation (for a short period of time) after allowing to fully understand and experience the temporal infinitude of the universe.

So, lots of adventures and discoveries are still to come after becoming newly free." - Soh, 2019

“Now it’s very clear that the whole universe is the total exertion of all conditions in spatial and temporal infinitude.. each activity is the exertion of all the conditions in ten directions and three times.” - Soh, 2019

“There are few conditions to experience maha as a ground [state] *(Soh: means effortlessly experienced in all situations as always already so)*

1. Mature in non-dual experience
2. DO (dependent origination)
3. Experience and understand that 'interconnectedness' is the universe itself

Then 'self' and even non dual becomes quite irrelevant. In fact now presence is not understand as non-dual to me, but as dependent origination, where non-dual is already included” - John Tan, 2009

If Maha Total Exertion (+A) has become a ground state, effortlessly so and clear, you have to ask yourself is the taste of -A present?

“Yes and very good. There is a very big difference between substantialist non-dual of One-Mind and what you said. In this experience, there is no background reality. It is not about the background Awareness but rather the foreground aggregates that you are talking about - A thought. There is just aggregates that are like foams, bubbles, ethereal having

all the same taste without substantiality and implicitly non-dual. No sense of body, mind and the world, nothing actual or truly there.

Before, when insight of anatta first arose, you still risk the danger of seeing the physical as inherent and truly existing. Therefore there is a period that you are lost, unsure and AF (Actual Freedom) seems appealing - a sign that you have not extended the insight of emptiness to phenomena though you kept saying twofold emptiness.

At present you focus on the following:
1. When there is no cold or heat *(Soh: See glossary at the bottom of the article)*
2. Total exertion

For 1, it is not difficult to understand now but for 2, you have not directly or adequately replace the 'Self/self' with the interdependence of whatever arises.” - John Tan, 06/12/2011 E-mail

~ *The Practice of No Cold or Heat vs Total Exertion*

“What you lack now is feel with the entire body mind until body-mind is entirely forgotten, deconstructed and enter into total exertion all things. There is neither you, body, mind, environment nor super awareness... just fully open up and experience the Beauty of this total exertion of suchness non dually. No body, mind, self can still remain at pure awareness level. The measurement is to total giving up so that the experience of how immensely is this web of interpenetration is experienced as this moment of arising is important. You need to practice with the view in mind to see the interconnection, not non-conceptuality of whatever arises.

There are two practices, one is feel the intensity of this moment of arise till there is no mind, body, self... directly right into the place where there is no heat or cold, the intensity of our luminous essence. The other is holding the view in mind till body, mind, self, universe is being deconstructed in this immense interconnectedness. They are different, yet both practices are equally important. One is total non conceptuality, one is full integration of the view interconnectedness. In non conceptuality of in hearing, just sound...there is no mind, no self, no hearer, just this sound. This universe is filled with the arising sound... Clear vivid and non-dual... you practice the intensity of luminous essence. But hearing sound, deep in you, you see the empty nature of arise, you see the stick, the drum, the eardrums, the sound ... This requires view... And not non conceptuality. If you continue to see this perpetually, then the mind, body, universe construct will also be dissolved and experience turn maha and dimensionless. Get it?”

"Without concepts, experience is naturally present and luminous is not exactly true imo.

We can stop conceptualization or even have many episodes of sustained non-conceptual non-dual or no mind experiences, still intellectual obscurations of seeing entities, entity possessing characteristics, cause and effect, agent and movement... etc continue to haunt us. Non-analytical cessation is temporary.

So the freedom from conceptualization cannot simply be a stopping of "conceptualization", a clear insight that sees through the emptiness of conventional constructs must arise.

Although the insight results in non-conceptuality, it also recognizes the cause of obstructedness is ignorance that obscures and blinds, not designations and constructs.

When contemplating DO (though conceptual), not only does the sense of self not arise, it replaces self view. Non-conceptual resting is too a means to an end. The end is not a non-conceptual luminous state but the complete uprooting of ignorance.

Therefore when Dogen rolls the boat in total exertion, there are concepts, designations and conventions but there is no sense of self, no sense of boundaries, no sense of obstructedness between the sky, the boat, the oar and the sea...all inter-penetrate beyond their conventional boundaries into the act of rolling." – John Tan, 2020

View must be fully integrated into your practice for you to understand what the maha experience is. Many do not understand the implication of right view yet. You do not go non conceptual and realize the maha experience of suchness.

It also requires to penetrate into DO by deeper investigation of the nature of experience. Where does sound go? Is there a "going, coming", is there a "here and there" of sound, is there a voidness where sound return to? Then what does it mean by "no going anywhere" and seeing DO. Then we begin to understand the view of activities and actions and when we see everywhere the seamless integration and total exertions, then maha experience will become more and more obvious and effortless. At this phase there is no self, no dual... All these are already implied... They are the content of emptiness.

You should look at few aspects:
1. Seeing inherent object as a mere convention collating... If a practitioner keeps penetrating whatever arises this way, experience will turn groundless and illusion–like
2. Seeing clearly in non dual mode but deep in us realize that this is merely a dependent originated manifestation, nothing ultimate and solidly real
3. You see "no going, no coming, no here, no there" and penetrate deeply into the seamless interpenetration of activities leading to the maha experience

Until this empty nature of whatever arises is intuited in our moment to moment of experience, you can then feel the total exertion and self liberating aspect of experience.” - John Tan, 2012

~ *Non-Arisen Nature of Phenomena (-A)*

This is not a matter of deconstructing physicality, objectivity, external universe, mind and body, etc.

“I am referring to complete deconstruction into Primordial Purity as emptiness (-A).” – John Tan

“Can the entire non-dual non conceptual experience be treated like AN IMPUTATION and emptiness and non-arising is directly tasted as its nature? This is different from deconstructing ‘physicality’.” - John Tan, 2013

Note: the above two quotations seem to be a contradiction but it is not, as it refers to two complementary aspects to the insight of emptiness, related to the freedom from elaboration and lack of self-nature as emptiness. See this article for more details: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2022/08/freedom-from-all-elaborations-and.html Freedom from All Elaborations and Freedom from Self-Nature

“Yes, I think should add together as they represent the 2 different view of emptiness.

Freedom from all elaborations and freedom from self-nature.

Yeah I included the two. One is freedom from all elaboration, one is spacious dream-like nature, lack of self-nature as emptiness.” - John Tan 2022

(-A)
30 years of practice and 23 years of kitchen life is like a passing thought.
How heavy is this thought?
The whereabouts of this thought?
Taste the nature of this thought.
It never truly arises.
- John Tan, 2013

“If we observe thought and ask where does thought arise, how does it arise, what is ‘thought’ like. 'Thought' will reveal its nature is empty -- vividly present yet completely un-locatable. It is very important not to infer, think or conceptualise but feel with our entire being this ‘ungraspability’ and 'unlocatability'. It seems to reside 'somewhere' but there is no way to locate it. It is just an impression of somewhere "there" but never "there". Similarly “here-ness” and “now-ness” are merely impressions formed by sensations, aggregates of causes and conditions, nothing inherently ‘there’; equally empty like ‘selfness’.

This ungraspable and unlocatable empty nature is not only peculiar to ‘thought’. All experiences or sensations are like that -- vividly present yet insubstantial, un-graspable, spontaneous, un-locatable.

If we were to observe a red flower that is so vivid, clear and right in front us, the “redness” only appears to “belong” to the flower, it is in actuality not so. Vision of red does not arise in all animal species (dogs cannot perceive colours) nor is the “redness” an inherent attribute of the mind. If given a “quantum eyesight” to look into the atomic structure, there is similarly no attribute “redness” anywhere found, only almost complete space/void with no perceivable shapes and

forms. Whatever appearances are dependently arisen, and hence is empty of any inherent existence or fixed attributes, shapes, form, or “redness” -- merely luminous yet empty, mere appearances without inherent/objective existence.

Likewise when standing in front of a burning fire pit, the entire phenomena of ‘fire’, the burning heat, the whole sensation of ‘hotness’ that are so vividly present and seem so real but when examined they are also not inherently “there” -- merely dependently manifest whenever conditions are there. It is amazing how dualistic and inherent views have caged seamless experience in a who-where-when construct.

All experiences are empty. They are like sky flowers, like painting on the surface of a pond. There is no way to point to a moment of experience and say this is ‘in’ and that is ‘out’. All ‘in’ are as ‘out’; to awareness seamless experience is all there is. It is not the mirror or pond that is important but that process of illusion-like phenomenon of the paint shimmering on the surface of the pond; like an illusion but not an illusion, like a dream but not a dream. This is the ground of all experiences.

Yet this ‘ungraspability and unlocatabilty’ nature is not all there is; there is also this Maha, this great without boundaries feeling of 'interconnectedness'. When someone hits a bell, the person, the stick, the bell, the vibration of the air, the ears and then the magically appearance of sound -- ’Tongsss...re-sounding...’ is all a seamless one happening, one experience. When breathing, it is just this one whole entire breath; it is all causes and conditions coming together to give rise to this entire sensation of breath as if the whole of universe is doing this breathing. The significance of this Maha experience is not in words; in my opinion, without this experience, there is no true experience of 'interconnectedness' and non-dual presence is incomplete.

The experience of our empty nature is a very different from that of non-dual oneness. ‘Distance’ for example is overcome in non-dual oneness by seeing through the illusory aspect of subject/object division and resulted in a one non-dual presence. It is seeing all as just ‘This’ but experiencing Emptiness breaks the boundary through its empty ungraspable and unlocatable nature.

There is no need for a ‘where-place' or a ‘when-time' or a ‘who-I' when we penetrate deeply into this nature. When hearing sound, sound is neither ‘in here’ nor ‘out there’, it is where it is and gone! All centers and reference points dissolve with the wisdom that manifestation dependently originates and hence empty. The experience creates an "always right wherever and whenever is" sensation. A sensation of home everywhere though nowhere can be called home. Experiencing the emptiness nature of presence, a sincere practitioner becomes clear that indeed the non-dual presence is leaving a subtle mark; seeing its nature as empty, the last mark that solidifies experiences dissolves. It feels cool because presence is made more present and effortless. We then move from "vivid non-dual presence" into "though vividly and non-dually present, it is nothing real, empty!".” - John Tan, 2009

“Snap your fingers, hear the sound.
Clearly heard but where?

Touch anything, feel them, feel the sensations dancing in zero dimension. Unlocatable, ungraspable.

Look around, look at the radiance of the color.
So undoubtedly "external" yet they are as "internal"!

Look at the scenery, clear, lurid and vivid.
But where? Outside? Inside?
In Soh's mind? In dog's mind, in everyone's mind?
Totally present yet absence!

All experiences are like that, like magic, like illusion.
So why look into space?
Look directly into the nature of experience.

Neither external nor internal,
Neither present nor absence,
Neither come nor go.
Unobstructable by being not here!
Indestructible by being unreal!” - John Tan, 2019

“Not bad however not exactly "natural state" yet but it is the beginning of the direct insight into "natural state". To be fully "natural" and "spontaneous", both self and phenomena, arising and ceasing must all be de-constructed thoroughly.

When sitting, there is no "body" and "no one" sitting. Only the sensation dancing. The "butt" that touches the "floor" forms the sensation of "hardness and firmness" -- the earth element.

Now, don't think but feel the sensation of "hardness and firmness", feel the earth element in anatta; so vividly and solidly present, now ask: where are all these sensations? So solidly and undeniably "appears" but "where"?

Happy anatta during CNY!👍”

- John Tan to someone who just realized anatta in 2021

~ *The Integration of Maha Total Exertion (+A) and Non-Arisen Nature of Phenomena (-A)*

“At some point, after getting familiarized with the realization and experience of +A and -A, during meditation or practice the experiential taste suddenly syncs into one. That is, the taste of total exertion where a given phenomenon is a seamless exertion with all other interconnected phenomenon, and the non-arising, illusory nature of presencing syncs into one.

Dependent arising thus non-arising, non-arising thus dependent arising.

This is to see the unity of the two truths from the perspective of experiential insight.

When this is, that is. Neither this nor that arises. Dharma is - illusory, unborn, indestructible, and seamlessly connected, great and boundless activity.”

- Soh, 2019

“Yes Angelo, total exertion!

I like your description of walking down a lighted hallway.

Like while walking in a shopping mall, there is no self, just the full fluxing sensations forming the the appearance of the “shopping mall”. Then when entering the car park, the entire fluxing sensations turn into a “carpark”. The taste of this wondrous fluxing appearance is beyond description.

As for physicality and senses, they are simply conventional designations. In total exertion, all designated boundaries dissolved and the six senses seamlessly inter-permeate each other into one miraculous functioning. In the exertion of seeing for example, it is not only the eyes see; the ears see; the nose sees, the colors see. The entire body-mind-universe marvelously arise as this moment of vivid scenery. In this moment, there is no seer and no seeing, just the beautiful scenery.

Look, appreciate and dwell deeply into it in non-dual and ask,

Where is this scenery?

Unlike sound, taste, thoughts and smell that vanish like evanescent mist, the scenery is vividly and obviously there, but where is it?

Powerfully present, yet empty like reflection.

Integrate the two taste and happy journey!”

- John Tan, 2019 (See: Angelo Gerangelo's Writings on Anatta and Total Exertion)

If either -A or +A is missing, one is still far from full integration. Many years ago, John Tan told Soh, “Your writings are all full of illusions and -A. Missed all the +A. This forfeits the whole purpose of opening the heart and the ear... ...The moment is not only ungraspable and empty (-A), but alive and powerful, fully connected and intimate with all things

and all times (+A). That moment when the self is gone, everything also becomes intimately connected.”

“Dependent Formation, No Coming and Going, Release

Just like a movie, appearances are dependently originating as formation like burning flames and bubbles without anything coming or going, completely essenceless. Appearances are completely empty and non arising by nature. Seeing this alone liberates. There is no persisting Essence or self/Self anywhere, only dependent formations. Nothing is there, void of substance yet appearing like flames and bubbles. As with a movie, any sense of something or someone coming from here or going there is wrong. It is because we fail to see the nature of dharma (phenomena) as dependent formation that we conceive of phenomena as having essences, as having a life of their own, that could come and go, arise, abide and cease on its own. Has the burning flame came from somewhere, arise, abide, and cease, or is merely an empty dependent formation? You may not attribute some essence to characters in the movie coming from somewhere and going somewhere, but you attribute this to things and persons in “real life”. Rather see that all phenomena are like burning flame or bubble that manifest on conditions and cease upon cessation or conditions but without anything coming or going, arising or ceasing. If you try to find where they abide, where they go and come from, nothing whatsoever can be found. Appearing but nothing “there”.

Do you say the flame has some Essence that has gone somewhere else when ceased? Do you say some Essence has arrived from somewhere when fire starts burning? No, just dependent formations. All afflictive and non afflictive phenomena roll on in dependence without a persisting essence, agent, or medium. Yet based on yesterday’s events, certain thoughts or actions take place today, as the continuity of the chain of dependencies. Still it is dependent formation, no self/Self involved.

Clinging and afflictions subside in actualizing this as there cannot be any sort of grasping at what is completely without Essence or self-existence. But this liberation does not come from the illusion-like experience but from the complete release of any notion of Essence.. the taste is illusion like but it is the release of Essence that is liberating. Just like it is not the experience of PCE/pure consciousness experience or a state of no-mind (which can simply be peak experiences) that liberates but the release of self/Self from realization of anatta that is liberating.

Seeing this requires us to see the right relationship between experience, view and realization, and not skewing to one aspect.” - Soh, 2019

On the illusion-like taste of phenomena, it has been given many analogies by various Buddhist masters starting from Buddha himself (see: Phena Sutta for instance).

“Seeing everything like space, like a magical illusion,
Neither meditating nor not meditating,
Neither separate nor not separate:
Such is the Yogin's realization”

~ Maitripa's Concise Summary of Mahamudra

“Form is like a glob of foam;
feeling, a bubble;
perception, a mirage;
fabrications, a banana tree;
consciousness, a magic trick—
this has been taught
by the Kinsman of the Sun.1
However you observe them,
appropriately examine them,
they’re empty, void
to whoever sees them
appropriately.
Beginning with the body
as taught by the One
with profound discernment:
When abandoned by three things
—life, warmth, & consciousness—
form is rejected, cast aside.
When bereft of these
it lies thrown away,
senseless,
a meal for others.
That’s the way it goes:
It’s a magic trick,
an idiot’s babbling.
It’s said to be
a murderer.2
No substance here
is found.
Thus a monk, persistence aroused,
should view the aggregates
by day & by night,
mindful,
alert;
should discard all fetters;
should make himself

his own refuge;
should live as if
his head were on fire—
in hopes of the state
with no falling away.”

- Phena Sutta, https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN22_95.html

All conditioned phenomena
Are like dreams, illusions, bubbles, and shadows,
Like dew and like lightning;
One should contemplate them in this way.

- Diamond Sutra https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/06/the-diamond-of-perfect-wisdom-sutra.html

“In the Udānavarga 2.18 it is clear the Buddha is addressing the nature of external phenomena:

He who has perceived that this body is (empty) as a vase, and who knows that all things (dharma) are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death. He who has perceived that this world is like froth, and who knows that all things are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death. He who has perceived that this body is like froth, and who knows that all things are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death.”

- *Kyle Dixon, 2021*

Also, see https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Eight_similes_of_illusion

~ *Eight Similes of Illusion*

The eight similes of illusion (Tib. སྒྱུ་མའི་དཔེ་བརྒྱད་, *gyumé pé gyé*, Wyl. *sgyu ma'i dpe brgyad*) are (in the order in which they appear in Longchenpa's *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Illusoriness of Things*):

1. Dream: like a dream, objects perceived with the five senses are not there, but they appear through delusion
2. Magical illusion: like a magic illusion, things are made to appear due to the temporary coming together of causes and conditions
3. Hallucination or *trompe-l'oeil*: like a hallucination, things appear, yet there is nothing there
4. Mirage: like a mirage, things appear, but they are not real
5. Echo: like an echo, things can be perceived, but there is nothing there, either inside or outside
6. City of gandharvas: like a city of gandharvas, there is neither a dwelling nor anyone to dwell
7. Reflection: like a reflection, things appear, but have no reality of their own
8. Apparition: like an apparition, there are different types of appearances, but they are not really there”

“🏵~LONGCHENPA 🏵

Since things neither exist nor don't
exist,
are neither real nor unreal,
are utterly beyond adopting and
rejecting -
one might as well burst out laughing.
LONGHENPA”

Malcolm’s translation of Longchenpa:

“don de nges par rtogs 'dod na
dpe ni nam mkha' lta bur btag
don ni chos nyid skye ba med
rtags ni sems nyid 'gag pa med

If one wishes to ascertain the meaning of that, the example is to examine "space-like."
The meaning is nonarising dharmatā.
The proof is the unceasing mind-essence.

In the commentary on this last line, the Chos dbying mdzod is cited:

"The proof is arising as anything at all from the potential (rtsal).
At the time of arising, there is no place of arising and no agent of arising.
If one examines the mere name, 'arising,' it is like space, including everything in a great, impartial uniformity.””

Someone asked: "Did Buddha ever taught physical reality was/is an "illusion"?"

Krodha (Kyle Dixon) replied the redditor:

“Yes, this is a strong theme throughout Buddhist teachings.

Some examples from the Pali Canon, starting with the Pheṇapiṇḍūpama Sutta SN 22.95:

Form is like a lump of foam; feeling is like a bubble; perception seems like a mirage; choices like a banana tree; and consciousness like a magic trick: so taught the Kinsman of the Sun. However you contemplate them, examining them carefully, they’re void and hollow when you look at them closely. Concerning this body, he of vast wisdom has taught that when three things are given up, you’ll see this form discarded. Vitality, warmth, and consciousness: when they leave the body, it lies there tossed aside, food for others, mindless.

Such is this process, this illusion, cooed over by fools. It’s said to be a killer, for no substance is found here. An energetic mendicant should examine the aggregates like this, with situational awareness and mindfulness whether by day or by night.

They should give up all fetters, and make a refuge for themselves. They should live as though their head was on fire, aspiring to the imperishable state.

Another from Udānavarga 2.18:

He who has perceived that this body is (empty) as a vase, and who knows that all things (dharma) are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death.

He who has perceived that this world is like froth, and who knows that all things are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death. He who has perceived that this body is like froth, and who knows that all things are as an illusion, does thus destroy the chief of Māra's flowers, and will no more be seen by the king of death.

Another, SA 265:

Monks, it is just as if a master magician or the disciple of a master magician at a crossroads creates the magical illusion of an elephant troop, a horse troop, a chariot troop, and an infantry troop, and a clear-sighted person carefully examines, attends to, and analyses it. At the time of carefully examining, attending to, and analysing it, he finds that there is nothing in it, nothing stable, nothing substantial, it has no solidity. Why is that? It is because there is nothing solid or substantial in a magical illusion.

Some Mahāyāna examples, in the Bhadramāyākāra Sūtra, it is said:

Maudgalyāyana, moreover, since the illusions of Bhadra the Magician are partial, his illusions are not true; but the illusions of the Tathāgata are true, therefore, all phenomena are fully realized to be illusory.

The Samādhirāja states:

All existence is like an illusion, powerless, like foam that gathers and becomes hollow.

And,

The primal nature of phenomena is empty, like an illusion, which tirthikas are unable to know. Understanding all phenomena to be similar to illusions, is not the domain of signs.

The Ārya-lalitavistara-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra says:

Because of dwelling in the equivalence of all phenomena with illusions, mirages, dreams, water moons, echoes and double vision, the Dharma free of affliction is perfectly realized.

The Ārya-mañjuśrīvikurvāṇaparivarta-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra:

Further, sister, the five aggregates are illusory. They do not exist. There is no arising of erroneous action. It is conventionally designated through an error. Sister, awakening is like an illusion, it does not exist, it is conventionally designated through an error. Sister, though awakening is like an illusion, it does not exist, it is conventionally designated through an error. Therefore, sister, because illusions are the same, the aggregates are the same. Because the aggregates are the same, illusion is the same. Since illusion is the same, awakening is the same. Since awakening is the same, illusion is the same. Sister, therefore, I call you "awakened".

The Ārya-ghanavyūha-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra says:

The suchness of all phenomena arises through power of mutual relation, the yogins seeing in that way clearly see it as suchness. The perfected nature is the dharmatā of phenomena; all phenomena do not arise as the substantial entities of the imputed: empty, insubstantial, beyond the extremes of existence and nonexistence, similar with illusions and dreams, like fairy castles, like opthalmia and like mirages.

The Acintyastavaḥ says:

Like a dream, an illusion, [or] seeing two moons: Thus have You [The Buddha] seen the world, as a creation not created as real. Like a son who is born, established, and dies in a dream, the world, You have said, is not really born, does not endure, and is not destroyed... According to cognition of truth, [however], You maintain that there is no annihilation or permanence. [You] assert that the entire world is empty of substance, like a mirage.

The Lokātītastava states:

You [The Buddha] have stated that all arising is like the arising of an illusion. Therefore You have fully understood that this world has arisen due to imagination. It is unreal, [and] not having originated it cannot be destroyed.

The Mahāyānaviṁśikā:

The object of knowledge in dream is not seen when one awakes. Similarly the world disappears to him who is awakened from the darkness of ignorance. The creation of illusion is nothing but illusion. When everything is compound there is nothing which can be regarded as a real thing. Such is the nature of all things. As the figments of a dream dissolve upon waking, so the confusion of Samsara fades away in enlightenment.

——-

Interesting that people are upvoting u/Sneezlebee’s inaccurate answer that “the Buddha never said physical reality itself is an illusion.”

And OP finds that “reassuring.” No offense but that inclination to seek a secure refuge or landing place should be thoroughly investigated. That is how deep our conditioning is.

Like the Ḍākārṇava Tantra says:

Everyone is confused by illusion; but the wise are liberated by illusion.

Seeing that this world - this so-called “physical reality” - is an illusion, is the doorway to liberation. Reifying this illusory reality as stable and real (vāstu) will seed the causes for the continual cycle of suffering.

There are two obscurations that prevent us from attaining buddhahood. These two obscurations must be eliminated to attain buddhahood. The first, the afflictive obscuration, is the perception of a self. The second, the cognitive obscuration, is the perception of an real external physical reality. Buddhas have eliminated both of these obscurations, they do not perceive a physical reality.

From Rongzom:

Moreover, the way [a buddha] knows and sees is not like holding [entities] to be substantial. He knows and sees [them] as an illusion. Likewise, the Dharmasaṃgītisūtra states:

For example, some magicians attempt to free a magically created [being by removing its magical power]. Since they already know [that it is an illusion], they face no obstructions to [correctly perceiving] that illusion-[like being]. Likewise, the wise, who are fully awakened, perceive the three [realms of] existence to be illusion-like.

Also, in the Pitāputrasamāgamasūtra it is stated:

Because a magician knows the magical apparition created [by him] to be an illusion, he is not confused by it. You, [too,] see the entire world ('gro ba: jagat) in this way. [I] pay homage and praise to one who sees everything [in this way].

Further, some say: The fully awakened one possesses the knowledge of the absolute, [namely], the so-called gnosis of knowing [phenomena] as [they actually] are, but does not possess the knowledge of the conventional, the so-called gnosis of knowing [phenomena] to the full extent. It is not that something knowable (mkhyen rgyu yod pa) is not known [by a buddha]. But since conventional knowable [phenomena] are non-existent, there is no gnosis of perceiving them [either]. How is it that conventional [phenomena] are non-existent? Conventional [phenomena] appear to ordinary beings as they are, namely, caused [in their case] by defiled ignorance (nyon mongs pa can gyi ma rig pa). They appear to the three [types of] nobles (i.e., śrāvaka saints, pratyekabuddhas, and bodhisattvas) as they are, namely, caused [in their case] by undefiled ignorance (nyon mongs pa can ma ying pa'i ma rig pa). It is, for example, like the appearance of strands of hair and [other] 'floaters' (rab rib: timira) to a [person] suffering from an eye disease. [Immediately] after the Diamond-like Samadhi [has arisen in him], a buddha discards [even undefiled] ignorance, and sees true reality, in that [he] does not see any phenomena. Therefore, these deceptive conventional [phenomena] do not exist in a buddha['s field of perception].

Also, Sneezlebee’s assessment that “consciousness dreaming the body” is a “new age” view is really not the case. This is implied in buddhadharma, and stated explicitly in some systems, the Khandro Nyinthig says:

To sum it all up, ignorant attachment to dualistic appearances assembles the rtsal of gnosis (jñāna - pristine consciousness) into the [four material] elements, and forms the body in actuality.”

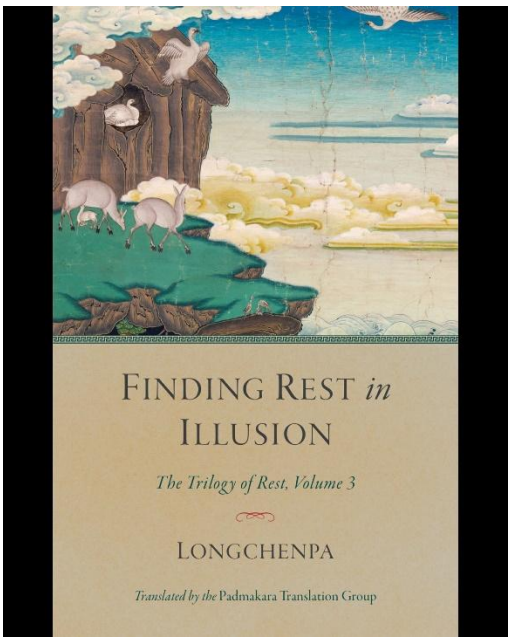
Longchenpa: Finding Rest in Illusion

Soh Wei Yu

Admin

· odpron9umh14tfuat740 ·

Important book recommendation for post anatta contemplation



John Tan: This book you must read and keep for life. It contains all needed and you really don't need anything extra. If you can intuit the teaching, it includes clearly all the key essential pointers of how the 6 supramadane powers are awaken and practice in the 3 states, the view, the path and the result to natural liberations.

Do read with utmost reverence and do not assume you have understood it. Get back to it again and again and summarise it if possible so that it gets into ur inmost consciousness.

Soh: Oic..
You just read?

John Tan:
Almost finished.

Do read with deepest reverence and respect and don't act smart. The commentary are very valuable also. Only the mirror analogy I don't like... Lol.

[5:58 pm, 07/05/2022] John Tan: And it is actually only 150 pages as the root text took up almost 35%.
[6:00 pm, 07/05/2022] John Tan: In fact this is the exact book that I have been looking for more than a decade that I told u.

11 Comments

- Lewis Stevens
  Love the title ... I’ll definitely check it out
  - 7h
- Kyoshu Okan Özaydin
  Lama Lena recommended 2 days ago in a meeting that this is the single book someone needs to take on a retreat.7h
- Cheng Chen
  Piotr Ludwiński 50/50 for me.
  In recent years, the mirror analogy is increasingly odd to me. Though it seems functional, the way it’s presented in language has a significant risk of leading one to believe oneself as the mirror. This subject-side bias can skew to all sorts of problematic views. It’s just not a good analogy.
  The masters back then should have used holographic lasers, quantum particles, or just a plain old iPhone screen as better analogies. I guess they were undereducated and uncivilized...
  I think it’s only recently that I came across Soh/JT describing their issues with the mirror.
  - 2h
- Soh Wei Yu
  Author
  Admin
  Cheng Chen I concur.
  I too had an issue with Longchenpa's description and analogy of mirror years ago, but found more recently based on what John Tan shared that Longchenpa is very much anatta.
  Probably you read this before: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../a-letter-to-almaas...

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
A Letter to Almaas on Dzogchen and Longchenpa
A Letter to Almaas on Dzogchen and Longchenpa

Yin Ling
Admin
I love it too, it’s one of the best coz the language is clear and simple.. not like usual Tibetan book can cause headache sometimes lol

- 6h

- Yin Ling
Admin
Btw Soh Wei Yu thanks for sharing all these helpful information with us 🙂

- 6h

- Jayson MPaul
Got it immediately. It's time I got back to reading books again.

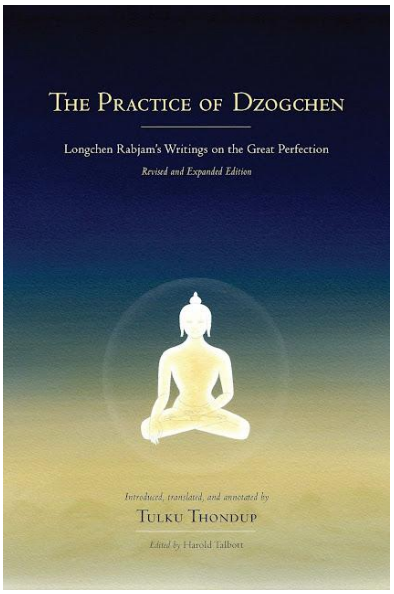
- 4h

Alejandro Serrano
Longchenpa is simply beautiful, amazing and very enlightening. I have only read the Treasuries translated by Richard Barron, but these series is definitely in my "to read" list.
3h

Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, Dzogchen, Emptiness, Longchenpa, Non-Arising 0 comments | |

“The Practice Of Dzogchen: Longchen Rabjam's Writings on the Great Perfection

Book recommendation:


The Practice of Dzogchen
Longchen Rabjam's Writings on the Great Perfection
Revised and Expanded Edition
Introduced, translated, and annotated by
Tulku Thondup
Edited by Harold Talbott

The Practice Of Dzogchen: Longchen Rabjam's Writings on the Great Perfection
https://www.amazon.com/Practice-Dzogchen-Perfection-Buddhayana-Foundation/dp/155939434X/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1

John Tan:

" https://www.shambhala.com/snowlion_articles/the-practice-of-dzogchen-2/
Exactly what I am searching "

IDENTIFICATION (OF THE BASIS) THROUGH (UNDERSTANDING THE) VIEW

The External Apprehended Objects Are Non-Existent Emptiness

(i) The appearances are unreal reflections like the eight examples of illusion. Every aspect of the five objects, such as form, included in the phenomena of the world and beings, are mere appearances with no true existence. All the appearances which have appeared to both the pure perceptions of the Buddhas and the impure perceptions of deluded beings are the percepts of wisdom and the mind. While the appearances are appearing to both perceptions, they are appearing with no inherent existence (*Rang-bZhin*), like a reflection in a mirror and rainbow rays in the sky. To the pure perception of wisdom the (appearances) transcend the extremes of existing and non-existing as there are no stains of apprehender and apprehended. As there is no creating, ceasing, and changing, all are free from the characteristics of compounded phenomena, the appearances of uncompounded emptiness-form, and are totally free from conceptualizations. To the perception of the deluded mind, (the appearances) merely appear as the object of apprehension of self *(bDag-'Dzin*), which have fallen into the extreme (concepts) of existing or non-existing, are detached from the characteristics of uncompounded (nature), and have strengthened the habituations of adventitious and circumstantial self-perceptions. So, here, one will understand that the objects, the delusory appearances of the mind, are unreal. Various external appearances, such as white and red, are merely the percepts of rigid habits, like a

dream created by the drunkenness of ignorant sleep. There is not the slightest existence (in them) as the object in the (true) meaning. Also, those appearances are not mind from the very point of their arising, because their substantial characteristics, such as color, size, and distinctions, negate the character of the mind. At the same time, they are not other than the mind, because, in addition to their being merely the delusory perceptions (of the mind), no other object has ever been established as such. The appearances to the mind are just types of experience of rigid habits continuing from beginningless time. It is like dreaming last night about a magic show one has seen yesterday. Therefore, one should think that whatever appears are appearances of non existence, and are without foundation, abiding place, natural existence, and recognizable (entity). They are merely a clear appearance of the empty nature like a dream, magical display, mirage, echo, shadowy view *(Mig-Yor*), water-moon (reflection), miracle, and the city of smell-eaters (a spirit world). Whatever appears, self or others, enemies or friends, countries or towns, places or houses, food or drink or wealth, and whatever one does, eating or sleeping, walking or sitting, one should train in seeing them as unreal. One should devote oneself to this training in all its aspects: the preliminary, actual, and concluding practices.

(ii) The objects, if analyzed, are emptiness. If the appearances are examined from gross to subtle down to atoms, they are partless and non-existent. So form is emptiness. (Likewise,) by examining color and recognition of sound, it (will be found to be) emptiness. By examining the form and essence of smell, it (will be found to be) emptiness. By examining the aspects of taste, they (will be found to be) emptiness. Especially, by examining the sources (sense-objects), the emptiness of touch will be reached. Although they are different in appearance, they are the same in their nature in being emptiness, so the emptiness of various objects are not separate categories. Their nature, like pure space, transcends being either separate or the same. So the nature of objective appearances is emptiness in its essence.

The Apprehender Has No Foundation and No Root

(i) The consciousnesses are self-clarity without foundation.

(There are eight consciousnesses.) The five sense-consciousnesses; arise as the five objects such as form, the mind-consciousness cognizes the general impression (of the appearing objects) and designates them as the objects, the defiled mind-consciousness is the sense of negating, accepting, hating and disliking (etc.), the mind-consciousness arises after the six consciousnesses (five senses and universal ground consciousness), ...and the consciousness of universal ground is self-clarity *(Rang-gSal*) and no thought and is unrelated to the objects: these are the eight or six consciousnesses. At the (very) time of (functioning of any of) those consciousnesses themselves, whatever consciousness it is, it is clear, vivid, and self-clarity with no foundations. Although they appear clear, there is no substantial entity. They are appearing without existence, like clear space and a breeze with no dust. Their clarity is present naturally like the sky without clouds. Their movements are like wind, not in distinguishable substances. From the (very) time of appearing, (the consciousnesses) as the apprehenders are self-clarity and unrecognizable. Watch them when they are arising and when they are abiding. Relax naturally and watch the manner of appearing of the apprehender. Thereby one will realize the apprehenders as having the nature of merely an appearance of clarity with no existence, emptiness with no bias, and self-clarity with no foundation.

(ii) (The subject), if analyzed, is emptiness without root.

By analyzing (whether) the self-clear, baseless mind (exists) in the external appearances, inner physical body, or intermediate movements, or if the entity of the self-dwelling mind itself (can be) recognized in (its) design, color, birth, cessation, and abiding, one will realize that its nature is non-existence, baseless and free from the extremes of either existence or non-existence. In this training the devotion to the Lama is the only important thing.

Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, Dzogchen, Longchenpa 0 comments | |”

Someone said all one has to do is contemplate on the illusoriness of phenomena and one realizes emptiness, but John Tan disagreed and said

“5/21/2012 12:37 PM: John: Not exactly...that is experience...what is important is to realize what the YouTube about h2o (https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=Q80MfH7xPPE) then the willingness to drop the inherent view becomes natural. Coupled with the direct experience of anatta and luminosity, experience will turn illusionary naturally but in a different light.
5/21/2012 12:38 PM: John: How is contemplating on illusion like phenomena [going to] lead one to such realization and not substantial non dualism?
5/21/2012 12:41 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Oic
5/21/2012 12:41 PM: Soh Wei Yu: Yes I think advaita also talk about illusory but returns to substantial
5/21/2012 12:44 PM: John: Over intellectualizing is no good without a good balance of direct experience. Right view then non conceptual direct experience of what the view is pointing. But get the view right.”

Emptiness as Non-Conceptuality

It must be understood that Emptiness is not the same as “dry non-conceptuality”, which we define as merely a state of the suspension of conceptual thinking. This is often the practice after a practitioner has a direct taste of the luminous Presence, or non-dual awareness. The tendency will be to drop all thoughts to rest in a state of naked awareness. However, this is not the same as the non-conceptuality of emptiness. Emptiness is non-conceptuality, but this refers to the emptying of false concepts from penetrative wisdom into the twofold emptiness of self and phenomena.

It should be noted that when “the disease of non-conceptuality” is spoken earlier in this document, it is referring to the aspect of coarse conceptual thinking and labelling. It is possible for example to suspend coarse conceptual thoughts and still perception is divided into a subject and object, in fact, one may experience oneself as a separate Witness of thoughts and perceptions. Or, even in a non-dual state, one can still reify an ultimate nondual subjectivity, or the objectivity of PCE.

As John Tan wrote, “The lingo is different. Like I said, for us non-conceptuality is not non-dual [and] is not non-inherent. For the Tibetan masters, conceptual construct implies duality and inherency and labeling.”

“In the Bodhicittavivarana (may not be a text from the same Nagarjuna who composed Mulamadhyamakakarika - see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nagarjuna#Works), Nagarjuna explains emptiness to be the absence of conceptualization.” - Soh

“I think most Tibetan Masters understand that way [emptiness as the absence of conceptualization]” - John Tan

“When Tibetans use the word conceptual, it means dualistic, it means characteristics, it means inherent, it means names and labels” - John Tan

“[conceptuality] refers to perceived, perceiver, characteristics and origination, substantive reality” – Soh

“Actually the whole issue lies in how you understand mmk whether as:

1. Freedom from self-nature" or
2. Freedom from elaborations/conceptualities

Sad to say if understood from 2 then one is only restricted to silence or mysticism beyond speech. If understood from 1, then it will include 2 (non-conceptual) as evident in ATR phases of insights, anatta into no-mind of pure empty appearance -A and total exertion of +A. This is because freedom from "self nature" will trigger insights of non-locality, Intimacy, embodiedment and total participation as well. Why?

Because without self/essence? There can't be dual therefore non-dual and non-conceptual; there can't be locality/time as well as seamless intimacy of everything.

If you contemplate deeply you will know.

Soh: Even anatta insight is more of 1.. the 2 if divorced from 1 becomes disease of non conceptuality you warned more than 10 years ago
Right

John Tan: Yes.” – Conversation in 2022

Conceptuality

John Tan wrote:

Ling Yin One of the biggest issue about freedom from all elaborations/conceptualities is the idea of what the Tibetan Buddhism meant by "conceptualities". They don't actually mean by what western thoughts or how we commonly understand -- a symbolic layer over "something". It actually meant imputed designation that is closely linked to self-nature.

So when you hear "conceptualities" always link to self-nature. That is why whenever explanations are made by Tibetan teachers, they always ended up explaining and relating to self-nature when they explain "conceptualities".

Even Mipham or Longchenpa I realized they are actually talking about that. I just hope one day this can be made clear by teachers as well as translators as it is extremely misleading to separate "conceptualities" from "self-nature" in these (Tibetan) teachings.
Labels: Emptiness, Freedom from Elaborations 0 comments | |

"The process of eradicating avidyā (ignorance) is conceived... not as a mere stopping of thought, but as the active realization of the opposite of what ignorance misconceives. Avidyā is not a mere absence of knowledge, but a specific misconception, and it must be removed by realization of its opposite. In this vein, Tsongkhapa says that one cannot get rid of the misconception of 'inherent existence' merely by stopping conceptuality any more than one can get rid of the idea that there is a demon in a darkened cave merely by trying not to think about it. Just as one must hold a lamp and see that there is no demon there, so the illumination of wisdom is needed to clear away the darkness of ignorance."
Napper, Elizabeth, 2003, p. 103"

“Nov
06
Freedom from Elaborations
John Tan: "Michael Hernandez that is another problem. Let's take all 3 major representatives -- Mipham of Nyingma, Tsongkhapa of Gelug and Dharmakirti of Yogacara. Each has his own definition. To Dharmakirti, linguistic and inference cognition is conceptual, perception is non-conceptual. Mipham has 3 categories of conceptualities if you studied them, I shall not elaborate here. To Tsongkhapa, all cognitions both conception and perception are conceptual. That is why Tsongkhapa sees everything as dependently originated and conventional and negation of intrinsic as ultimate as nothing isn't conceptual and dependen
Yet the so called "conceptuality" they all agreed that when dissolved that will give rise to non-conceptual gnosis is actually "the very subtle tendency to dualify" which imo is no different from "inherent existence".
As for me, after all these years of sorting out I prefer to retrict "conceptual" definition to mental activities that relate to linguistic, mental inference and labelling which is closer to our daily usage. I do not consider deep karmic tendencies as "conceptual".
For the ineffable beyond speech, there is nothing that can be said as it is the termination of all words and the way of leaping to that can be by koan or by way of negation and deconstruction. We can also do somatic or energy practices.
[7:43 am, 06/11/2021] John Tan: Gilles Therrien Why isn't Heart Sutra points directly to the Heart but instead points to freedom from all elaborations?
[7:43 am, 06/11/2021] John Tan: Do you know why?
Soh: oic... malcolm just said basically inexpressibility is like pointing to the lack of inherent existence.
malcolm:
Dharma is not a via negativa. Dependent origination = emptiness.
Inexpressibility simply means that we cannot point to anything and declare “this is how this appearance is.” It means there is nothing behind the relative to describe, and it means that descriptions of appearances fail to capture the reality of those appearances. But there is certainly nothing behind nor beyond them, just as there is nothing behind a mirage, illusion, etc., but causes and conditions that lack inherent existence themselves.

....
There is no source, no pure love, or anything like it. The highest manifestation of consciousness is a person who has realized how things are 100%, in other words, a buddha.
Now, to the extent that Buddhas are motivated by love, the wish that sentient beings be happy, we can say they are embodiments of love. But there is nothing at all mysterious about that, just as there is nothing mysterious about a mother’s love for an only child.
Soh: no inherent existence is the key to experience the heart as all appearance. so emptiness is form
John Tan: Yes
John Tan: Here, "ineffable" is in the same vein as our inability to communicate the "sweetness" of sugar or the "sourness" of lemon, not about any transcendental ground that is beyond. ” – November 2021
Labels: Anatta, Emptiness 0 comments | |”

Apr
26
Freedom from Elaboration and Emptiness of Self-Nature

[7:58 pm, 25/04/2022] John Tan: Imo it is different insight, different emphasis and and different praxis, but result is the same. Both will clear certain obscurations that are not easy to c.

For freedom of all elaborations is like insight of anatta extended to all phenomena where not only conceptual notion of self is deconstructed but also phenomena, events, cause and effect...etc. One comes face to face to primordial suchness (pure appearances). In order words, the full maturity of anatta therefore it is most intuitive and direct to ATR people and why I like Mipham in the first place.
But I when I started studying Tsongkhapa I realized empty of self-nature is different. Both conceptual and non-conceptual, imagined appearances and pure appearances share a single space-like taste of emptiness (essencelessness). Whereas for freedom from all elaborations, they are "irreconcilable".
Therefore followers of Tsongkhapa, they will have no such issue about Andre first point (and there are other issues): "It feels odd, right? How can conceptuality or lack thereof have anything to do with the way things arise or manifest?" Y? Because it is precisely this essencelessness that manifestion is possible. It is because of corelessness the dependent arising is possible.
Like what I wrote to you and yin ling:
In addition to having this taste, you may want to explore "empty of self-nature" from an experiential angle rather than analysis.
Be in anatta and while in the bliss of non-dual, see how radically different is the music and the vivid scenery; how thought is markedly different from sensations and smell; how a "shopping mall" can "transmute" into a "carpark"?
Ask urself how all these are even possible? So seamless and instantaneous is the "morphing", simply miraculous!
Ask urself again, how is this possible at all if there is essence? Let the insight of "essencelessness" permeates ur entire being and heal all ur clogged up energies.

Then look at thoughts and conceptualities. See how malleable thoughts and conceptual ideas are and see how they freely manifest. How are all these even possible if there is "essence"?
Next look at dependent arising. How is it possible to even originate in dependence so seamlessly? Feel the "essencelessness" and feel the "magic" and wonder. You must feel "essencelessness", not think essencelessness.
Then you will understand the intent of Nagarjuna. There will be no arguments. You will realize that only because of "essencelessness" are all these possible. You will understand it is precisely that there is no self-nature, there is causal efficacies; because it is dream-like, there is all these vivid appearances and happenings.
Anyway that is just my opinion.
[8:05 pm, 25/04/2022] John Tan: Don't go argue and over emphasize for each has their own path.
[8:07 pm, 25/04/2022] John Tan: One is like horizontal breadth to all phenomena of anatta while the other is like vertical depth of anatta.
-->>This can perhaps be summarized by saying that dependent arising and the 'aproximate ultimate' (emptiness as nisvabhava) are indeed synonymous (since they are conceptual equivalents), while the actual ultimate (emptiness as nisprapanca or 'freedom from elaborations') has no synonyms whatsoever, since it is not a conceptual object at all.
Yes. Only spontaneous presence and natural perfection. There is not even knowingness or apprehension.
Labels: Dependent Origination, Emptiness, John Tan, Mipham Rinpoche, Tsongkhapa |

“The Reasoning of Dependent Arising

This is the reasoning analyzing all phenomena, the fourth of the four ways of realizing that the mind of self-awareness is without true existence. In this regard, it is said that the antidotes to ignorance are the 12 branches of dependent-arising. Naropa says:

'Being an awareness,

The mind of self-awareness

Has the nature of luminosity.

Being nonconceptual,

It does not conceive of itself.'

The very nature of such a mind is non-conceptuality.

Let us take, as an example, a person who has a mind of self-awareness which is an exalted wisdom. When that person realizes that the mind is exalted wisdom, it is said that he or she ceases to look elsewhere for Buddha. However, the mind of self-awareness can be obstructed by temporary stains. The mind afflicted by conceptuality is like water, gold, and space, in this way: in their relative states, all these are subject to distinctions of pure and impure, but their true nature is luminosity. In their true nature, even the slightest stain is utterly nonexistent.

Just as outer phenomena do not exist, so inner phenomena do not exist; just as inner phenomena do not exist, so outer phenomena do not exist. It is said that sentient beings are not sentient beings; however, it is not the case that they do not exist. One must come to realize the ultimate nature free from the conventional nature.

Furthermore, all phenomena, from forms through omniscient consciousnesses, are dependent-arisings; dependent-arisings are momentary phenomena; momentary phenomena are produced from conditions; that which is produced from conditions is not produced inherently.

As the Buddha said:

'That which is produced from conditions is not produced,

Because it is without inherent production.

That which depends on conditions is emptiness.

One who knows emptiness is aware.'

This is how one is to understand the true foundation of the mind. One who has such understanding is said to possess the realization that is not touched by the three great views*. There is no assertion*.

As Lord Jigten Sumgon says:

'Finally, realize directly the Truth Body: such realization transcends the three great views; it is utterly free of viewing, object of view, and agent of view. This is a special feature of our system, not possessed by any other.'

Those three great views are of course needed. But if you are not free from attachment to high status*, then you will not realize the view; you will not get at the real view.

The real view is free of assertion.

As Lord Jigten Sumgon says:

'Since I have no assertion,

I do not incur those faults.

The Conqueror said nothing to his disciples;

Then he explained extensively

That which had been unsaid.'

Thus, the view must be accompanied by realization. Having realized the view, meditate on it.

~ pg 77 - 79, Garland of Mahamudra Practices, translated by Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche and co-translated by Katherine Rogers

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*The three great views:

The three great views are Madhyamika, Mahamudra, and the view known as Dzogchen in Tibetan.

*There is no assertion:

Each of the three great views explains phenomena and emptiness a little differently and therefore involves some assertion; and where there is assertion there is duality. With the faults of duality, the view cannot be realized --- that is, cannot be known unmistakenly and nonconceptually. The real view is without assertion. When one really realizes the true fact of the view of all phenomena, one can give it any name. In this system it is called mahamudra, but that is only a name, and the true nature is beyond all names. It simply is, as fire is hot, and there is nothing to accept or reject.

*Free from attachment to high status:

A person attached to high status is one who would take pride, for example, in being Madhyamika, or in being a mahamudra practitioner. If you are not free from such pride, you cannot realize the ultimate view, which is free of assertion. One who does realize the view free of assertion is said to be untouched by any view; that is, untouched by any dualistic assertion.” - Garland of Mahamudra Practices by Khenchen Konchog Gyaltshen

“Nāgārjuna is famous for arguing that his philosophy was not a view, and that he in fact did not take any position (paksa) or thesis (pratijña) whatsoever since this would just be another form of clinging to some form of existence.[77][64] In his Vigrahavyavartani, Nāgārjuna states:

If I had any position, I thereby would be at fault. Since I have no position, I am not at fault at all. If there were anything to be observed through direct perception and the other instances [of valid cognition], it would be something to be established or rejected. However, since no such thing exists, I cannot be criticized.[78]

Likewise in his Sixty Stanzas on Reasoning, Nāgārjuna says: "By taking any standpoint whatsoever, you will be snatched by the cunning snakes of the afflictions. Those whose minds have no standpoint, will not be caught." [79] Randall Collins states that for Nāgārjuna, ultimate reality is simply the idea that "no concepts are intelligible", while Ferrer notes that Nagarjuna criticized those whose mind held any "positions and beliefs", including the view of emptiness, as Nāgārjuna says: "The Victorious Ones have announced that emptiness is the relinquishing of all views. Those who are possessed of the view of emptiness are said to be incorrigible."[80][81] Aryadeva echoes this idea in his Four Hundred Verses:

"First, one puts an end to what is not meritorious. In the middle, one puts an end to identity. Later, one puts an end to all views. Those who understand this are skilled."[82]”

“[5/3/19, 10:33:03 PM] Soh Wei Yu: it is freedom from conceptualization by seeing that growth and decay are not self-existent by its own side but but merely imputed. It’s like seeing sun and sunray as cause and effect, solid, separate, causal.. but when seen as dependently designated then both sun and sunray are just empty seamless exertion
[5/3/19, 10:35:47 PM] John Tan: So what is the difference from non-conceptuality
[5/3/19, 10:36:49 PM] Soh Wei Yu: one is a nonanalytical nonconceptuality which can be just a state like shamatha, the other type of nonconceptuality is like insight that leads to perception shift which you say is the tibetan version of nonconceptuality
[5/3/19, 10:38:24 PM] John Tan: So do you understand the difference when you read non-conceptual as freedom from extremes, the middle way. From the normal shamatha non-conceptuality. One is non-arisen analytical and one is Non-analytical
[5/3/19, 10:40:32 PM] Soh Wei Yu: ic..
[5/3/19, 10:42:12 PM] John Tan: When does deconstruction stop?
[5/3/19, 10:42:29 PM] Soh Wei Yu: analytical cessation
[5/3/19, 10:43:01 PM] John Tan: How is it like?
[5/3/19, 10:44:43 PM] Soh Wei Yu: the view of the essence, that phenomena exists on its own side and has its own causal powers must be penetrated then whatever perception is free from inherent self/Self/background, and foreground too is non-arisen like moon-reflections.. appearing but nothing existing by its own side, nothing there, just seamless exertion”

"Buddhism penetrates deeper and look at how the very idea of "real" and "existence" mean and how it confuses the mind. Vedanta’s idea of world is illusory is not as penetrative.

How the mind reifies conventions in various ways on which self as a construct is most crucial imo.

If you start from phenomena and object, it may not be that obvious, direct and experiential.

Then one has to really look into the dual purpose of how deconstruction takes place and why emptiness is taught as in the chariot analogy. This part is not necessarily the intention of emptiness teaching but I find that it can't be just a coincidence for it to be taught that way. Anyway it is an excellent semblance of appearance is like conceptually 🤣.

Then you have to look into the depth of no agency.

No need to keep convincing ppl.

Refine your understanding and experience. There are far deeper depths to explore.

You don't have to go too deep into madhyamaka but there are certain aspects you need to understand. Then you will clearly see that the entire purpose is to cease reifications and free one from extremes.

However many can still land as affirmative negation. What you have to be clear is to understand the entire purpose is to see through conventionalities and free oneself from conceptualities naturally, not to affirm anything... their non-affirmative negation. Once the mind understand essence is just a view, mind can never hold, then when one is introduced to presence, the understanding will be entirely different.

I have told you many times there are 2 levels, one is mind level release and the other is presence. Both are equally important. In fact the mind level release and clear discernment of that level is very crucial. Otherwise you have all these I AM misconception everywhere.

If we do not understand the meaning of non-conceptualities properly, then we will end up [having] the non-conceptuality in I AM, one mind, dualistic mind...
So you must differentiate the non conceptualities that arise from seeing through reifications and the rest. It is like heaven and earth sort of difference.
So both levels require the wisdom that sees through constructs, otherwise non-conceptuality is not the non-conceptuality I am talk about and presence is the not presence I am talking about also.” – John Tan, 2020

“To me Experiencing an awareness without concept and gap between two moment of thought is not experiencing emptiness. Experiencing the self-releasing of whatever arises directly is experiencing emptiness and awareness in this state is without ground, base, attachment, clear and luminous.

Directly experiencing the gap between two moment of thoughts do not require a practitioner to embrace the "view" of emptiness.” – John Tan, 2011

“Wonder why K sees "things" are only conceptual designations as an issue. In fact that is key to understanding prasangika madhyamaka and in fact only after insight of anatta can one fully accept this profound insight. But it is not how Mr. J explains and understands.

We must accept that all are mere imputations but from the insight of anatta, not from the insight of substantialist view. "Phenomena" is understood differently from our general English usage, "phenomenon" in Buddhism in general is object possessing identifiable characteristic and therefore having essence that is findable. However in Prasangika it is said that phenomena are merely names and imputations. But "mere" imputation in Prasangika cannot be understood apart from its dependencies. This dependency is key and is what dependent arising and emptiness are about.

When Prasangika says that things or phenomena are just mere labels, names, designations or imputations, it is not as we understood in common English terminology, rather, it is to be understood from the perspective of dependent designations, not just designations. Without understanding this dependencies, we are not understanding what is meant

by "mere designations". That is, it is mere name/designation/imputation because the designated referent as an entity when sought can never be found apart from its basis of designation. This basic understanding must be there and must go into our inmost mindstream. And only direct insight of anatta can understand the significance.

Therefore the non-conceptuality is not simply non-conceptuality as in freedom from labeling but a freedom from the blinding spell of seeing things in terms of 4 extremes from reified designations. This extends to all phenomena be it conditioned or unconditioned phenomena. As for non-conceptuality, there are fierce debates between Gorampa and Tsongkhapa. There is also Mipham's view of non-conceptuality but these masters agree that the mode of non-conceptuality is a very specific and special mode of intuitive insight that relates to freedom of extremes, not just imageless bare mode perception.” - John Tan, 2014

“Malcolm wrote:
Apart from the Gelugpas, all Madhyamaka approaches, including Nāgārjuna's clearly underline the need to negate all four extremes in the ultimate, not merely one.
BuddhaFollower wrote:

Negation of all 4 extremes is done simply by understanding non-arising?

Is that right?
Malcolm:

No, not if you are an ordinary person. If you are an ordinary person, you must go through step by step and analyze all four extremes. Having ascertained through analysis that a phenomena existing through the four extremes does exist in the relative, one then applies that analysis to the ultimate, finding that also that there is nothing which can be found in the ultimate existing by way of the four extremes. Then, as Khenpo Ngalo states:

"Likewise, the mind free from the trio of arising, ceasing and abiding, existence and nonexistence, and being and nonbeing, is naked in the emptiness free from proliferation. In one’s experience, the unceasing stream of mere clarity and mere awareness is empty at the time of being clear and clear at the time being empty — do not grasp clarity or emptiness. Rest wholly, nakedly and freely in the state that is free from extremes, without divisions, inexpressible and beyond thought.
Finally, rest free of concepts [had de chad de] without grasping in mere inexpressibility."

This means that having completed one's analysis one simply rests in the nature of the mind as one finds it, without modifying it in anyway.

Malcolm wrote:
Yes, heat on the path of preparation/application is a conceptual mind, it is a samadhi on an inferential emptiness.

cloudburst wrot
so how do you then explain that one goes from the path of preparation, a conceptual mind, to the path of seeing, a non-conceptual mind? If you insist on using only your specific terminology/ translation style, could you explain how one goes from the path of preparation, a conceptual mind, to the path of seeing, a non-conceptual wisdom?
Malcolm:
To paraphrase Shantideva:

When neither an object or a non-object remain before the mind, since there is other alternative, that time the mind is pacified.

This is also the intent of the siddha Kotalipa:

Do not meditate on non-existents,
also do not meditate on existents...

Malcolm: But if you meditate with a conceptual mind you are not meditating on the ultimate, since the ultimate, according to Shantideva, is not within the range of the mind, the mind being relative.

cloudburst wrote:
Can you please explain the development, from a conceptual mind on the path of preparation, of a mind to which neither object or nor non-object appears?

Malcolm:
All grasping to signs ceases, that is the path of seeing. The path of seeing is a (temporary) cessation of the conceptual mind, not a transformation of a conceptual mind into a nonconceptual mind.

When neither an object or a non-object remain before the mind, since there is other alternative, that time the mind is pacified.

Malcolm wrote:
But if you meditate with a conceptual mind you are not meditating on the ultimate, since the ultimate, according to Shantideva, is not within the range of the mind, the mind being relative.
Tsongkhapafan wrote:
Shantideva doesn't say this at all. He says that the ultimate cannot be realised directly by a mind that has dualistic appearance:

(2) The two truths are explained as conventional truths and ultimate truths.
Ultimate truth, emptiness, is a nonaffirming negative phenomenon

That cannot be realized directly by a mind that has dualistic appearance,
For such minds are conventional, and thus mistaken awareness.

Malcolm wrote:
Sure he does:

saṃvṛtiḥ paramārthaśca satyadvayamidaṃ matam|
buddheragocarastattvaṃ buddhiḥ saṃvṛtirucyate

saṃvṛtiḥ paramārthaśca
ཀུན་རྫོབ་དང་ཞེ་དོན་དམ་སྟེ།

Relative and ultimate,

satyadvayamidaṃ matam|
།འདི་ནི་བདེན་པ་གཉིས་སུ་འདོད།

this is asserted as the two truths.

buddheragocarastattvaṃ
།དོན་དམ་བློ་ཡི་སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་མེན།

The ultimate is not [within] the range [gocara, spyod yul] of the mind;

buddhiḥ saṃvṛtirucyate
།བློ་ནི་ཀུན་རྫོབ་ཡིན་པར་བརྗོད།

The mind is said to be relative.

[1:14 PM, 6/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: What do you think
[1:41 PM, 6/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I think malcolm is saying like at the end of the analysis there is no more concepts and then rest in nonconceptual empty clarity
[1:41 PM, 6/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Its like andre view
[1:41 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: Yes that is dzogchen view
[1:42 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: That is also my view lol
[1:43 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: But to uproot the intellectual obscurations before one can naturally rest in appearances.
[1:43 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: One can have the view but to claim pre-maturely is a different matter.
[1:44 PM, 6/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I see.. ya i agree
[1:45 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: If one simply has a conceptual understanding of freedom from extremes via seeing

dependencies, that is not uprooting ignorance.

[8:15 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: Read what Andre wrote...quite good.

I think he shouldn't engage too much on conceptualization, if he already feels transparent, borderless and spacious, should just practice resting in ease as dimensionless free floating appearances.

[8:17 PM, 6/11/2020] Soh Wei Yu: You mean the posts i posted in blog?
[8:17 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: Yes
[8:22 PM, 6/11/2020] John Tan: For you, don't try to experience more. You don't have to do anything, just relax and be natural and allow luminous appearances self manifest...feel the vivid sharpness and radiance, be light and free.”

“The cognizer perceives the cognizable;
Without the cognizable there is no cognition;
Therefore why do you not admit
That neither object nor subject exists [at all]?

The mind is but a mere name;
Apart from it's name it exists as nothing;
So view consciousness as a mere name;
Name too has no intrinsic nature.

Either within or likewise without,
Or somewhere in between the two,
The conquerors have never found the mind;
So the mind has the nature of an illusion.

The distinctions of colors and shapes,
Or that of object and subject,
Of male, female and the neuter -
The mind has no such fixed forms.

In brief the Buddhas have never seen
Nor will they ever see [such a mind];
So how can they see it as intrinsic nature
That which is devoid of intrinsic nature?

"Entity" is a conceptualization;
Absence of conceptualization is emptiness;

Where conceptualization occurs,
How can there be emptiness?

The mind in terms of perceived and perceiver,
This the Tathagatas have never seen;
Where there is the perceived and perceiver,
There is no enlightenment.

Devoid of characteristics and origination,
Devoid of substantiative reality and transcending speech,
Space, awakening mind and enlightenment
Possess the characteristics of non-duality.”

- Nagarjuna, Bodhicittavivarana

"...But to me, as I started from a direct experience of presence, I do not see the need to put an end to conceptuality by way mmk ... That is MMK imo is much more than putting an end to conceptuality. It will be quite a clumsy technique if the sole purpose is to reach that as a goal. Zen koan, the two stanzas, vipassana bare attention, self enquiry are all more efficient and effective ways to achieve that goal. In fact after I got familiar why these techniques, I have my own koan and techniques to trigger people into non-conceptual experiences...lol" – John Tan, on how emptiness is not mere non-conceptuality which can also be found in the I AM realization/experience

“Mr. AA posted:

When all of these confused
conceptual imputations dissolve, there is nothing more you have to do. To gain
realization, there is no place you have to go to: When conceptual fabrications dissolve, that is realization. There is no realization apart from that. This is
because what is to be realized is essential reality free of conceptual fabrications.
So when conceptual fabrications dissolve, inconceivable reality is realized. And,
although it is called “essential reality beyond concepts,” this essential reality
does not truly exist either. There really is nothing to realize.
Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso Rinpoche

John Tan
Mr. AA
, is there any difference between conceptual imputations and conceptualities?

· Reply
· 4d

Mr. AA

I'm not sure. Perhaps imputations are deeper and carry emotional involvement and identity, while conceptualities are mere functional thoughts. What do you have in mind?
1

· Reply
· 3d

Mr. R
John Tan
conceptualities are concepts like meanings of words which have functional value like Mr. AA said and allow us to have these conversations by understanding concepts. Conceptual imputations are when these are mistaken for reality and filter our sense experience assuming selves, inherently existing things, dualities and so on.
2

· Reply
· 3d

John Tan
Thks Mr R
. So should one be free from conceptualization or free from conceptual imputations?
And what do you think the "freedom" here means with reference to Gillies reply:
1. Not being affected and dissolve the grasping or
2. Completely eliminates that layer of imputation/imagination/conceptualization or
3. No longer see objectively independent reality out there. How does freedom relate to seeing through "objectively independent reality"?

· Reply
· 3d · Edited

Mr. AA
John Tan
, you asked Mr. R, but let me explore it also.
Imputations are to be abandoned because they actively fabricate and distort experience, they add symbolic and dualistic dimensions to the bare field of appearances. Conceptuality is a mere set of conventional meanings used for the sake of communication. However, in a realized mind, except for sheer communication, I'd say even concepts dissipate - there is no linguistic overlay established upon appearances. There's just the luminous insubstancial display. There is no notion of "thingness" and thus no subsequent notion of substance, function, name, etc.
First the grasping dissolves, but as solidity and thingness are seen through, all imagination and conceptualization dissolve too. An antidote may initially be applied, but it too is eventually dropped.
The freedom that sees through "objectively independent reality" is freedom from a sense of separation, duality, constriction and limitation. Because "a world out there" necessarily implies "a self in here", and that sense of embodiment ("I am body") and localization ("I am here and not there or everywhere") is constricting and limiting. When seeing through solidity, duality and separation, an intimacy (no space) and immediacy (no time) steps in, and experience is relieved both of internal splits (inner/outer, subject/object, mind/matter) and external splits (this experience / the rest of the universe, this experience / other experiences). No center, but also no edge.

1

· Reply
· 2d

John Tan
Yes André
, I agree with most of what you said, just 3 points:
1. Primordial state, original face.
What does it mean to to be without the imagined and imputed? It is simply one's primordial state, always and already so despite non-recognition. So sometime the mental mind can't get around, it can't see the relationship.😂
So the path can be directly pointing to one's original face or to rid from all imputed imagined artificialities.
But the direct leap out of the imputed layer is often not exhaustive and thorough, many blindspots and hindrances.
Therefore a short cut can often turns out to be a longer cut.
2. Unmade, natural and spontaneous
I agree that without imputations, there is no boundaries. Therefore all experiences are open and spacious and without the layer of the imagined, whatever appears is pristine and pellucid, transparent and crystal.
In addition to that, purge of all imputed artificialities, whatever appears is also unmade and unconditioned, natural and spontaneous.
3. Seeing through duality and seeing through inherency to me is not the same and has different experiential tastes.
When we say "the lightning is flashing", there are no two parts - "lightning" and "flashing", the flashing is the lightning.
When we say "the mover and the movement", there are no two parts - "mover" and "movement", the mover is the movement.
Same for the anatta insight, hearer hearing sound. There are no 3 parts, no hearer hearing sound, the hearer is the hearing is the sound.
That is seeing through thingness, agency and action.
But seeing through duality like inner/outer, left/right, entry/exit, object/subject is different. When the line of demarcation that divides dissolved, experience turns non-dual but sense of "thingness" can still remain intact quite strongly imo.
So this teaching of exhausting "thingness" is quite unique, it is not just doing away with duality or conceptualities in bare attention or being naked in awareness or having pure conscious experience (pce).
Last question:
What if one does not go through the path of seeing through mental imputation and reification?
Any other ways to free oneself from the sense of agency-action, duality and boundaries?
Got to go, late for work. Thks for sharing!
1

· Reply
· 2d · Edited

Mr. AA
Any other ways..? I'm not sure. Contemplating conditionality perhaps? It's less conceptual and more experiential.
Yes, seeing non-duality is not the same as seeing no-inherency. The former is more about seeing through the characteristics of subject-object, while the latter seems to be more about seeing through all types of characteristics.

What do you suggest to see through "thingness"? I may tend to fall into PCE's.
1

· Reply
· 1d

John Tan
I think you have explored and are familiar with the different deconstruction methods and yes DO (general dependent origination) is an excellent tool for deconstruction. It deconstructs without ignoring diversities. In DO, one feels the deep intimacy and connectedness with the diversities, yet everything dissolves into a seamless formation of a total situation. Everything includes the sense of self and others, hereness and nowness, time and space, mind and body, physical and materiality and so and and so forth.
But I am not looking at DO. In the Taoism YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-V3FknauoYo) that Soh posted, Jason Gregory provides another perspective to look at the agency-action issue. The emphasis is more on habitual repetition into elimination of the agent from the action/activity.
But I am not referring to that as well. I am looking more on the non-attachment aspect, the freedom from gain/loss, success/failure, pride and fear in any endeavour. Practicing that way, the gap between the agent and action will also be gradually reduced to none, into the flow of actionless action.
As for falling into PCEs, there is nothing wrong falling into PCEs imo; just how uncontrived and effortless, how natural and spontaneous the PCEs are. More importantly, are the PCEs endowed with deep wisdoms that sees through:
1. self (anatta)
2. phenomena (chariot analogy)
3. characteristics (redness of a flower). The lurid redness that appears to stick to a red flower seems to be an inherent part of the flower. But is it? There is neither redness out there nor in here. at the flower, nor on the mind, nor...
4. the sematics/meanings of conventionalities
5. appearances (experienctial emptiness). Appears but not found.
To me over-emphasis of non-conceptualities (too early) is an extreme and can be a great disservice as it "bypasses" those valuable insights that see through reifications and semantic/meaning of conventionalities.
But seeing through "thingness" moderates this extremity, it is like the middle path between conceptual and non-conceptualities.
Eventually and gradually, everything too will be de-constructed; no thoughts and concepts, calmly and evenly into transparent pristine appearances in natural spontaneity.
1

· Reply
· 1d · Edited

Mr. AA
I don't understand why can't redness be in the mind - not intrinsically so, of course.

· Reply
· 20h

Geovani Geo

I guess its because "redness" would be another "thing".

· Reply
· 13h · Edited

John Tan
Yes André
, I am referring to intrinsically and inherently.
That said, you may also want to look deeper into point 4 and compare it with the de-construction of "thingness/inherent-ness" of my earlier message:
1. The very idea of "in", the very idea of "from" or the idea of "produce" are all sematics of conventionalities. We have mistaken "meanings" of these conventions as undeniable "reality" but they too are imputed. The mind thinks surely even without labels and designations, there is still the actuality of being "in" something, somewhere but this is not true. "In-ness" too is a formation formed from "mental constructions + sensations". They can similarly be de-constructed. If a mind free from all these sematics of conventionalities or total exhaustion of conceptualities, what is experience like?
It is not "knowingness" nor a "not knowing mind", but just liberating all sematics of conventions and simply resting as mere clean, pure, pellucid sense of vivid radiance (in absorption)?
2. Seeing through "inherent-ness/thingness" which is what I said in my earlier message.
If you are interested, you can explore into them otherwise just treat it as some blah blah blah.. 🤣

· Reply
· 12h · Edited

Mr. AA
Yes, redness as a concept is totally imagined. And yet, a mere appearance is present. We can't say, of course, where it appears, or what it is, etc. Those would all be designations. But conventionally, it is indeed an appearance in mind. And I've seen John and Soh talking about such example, but how they get to the "unarisen" insight always eludes me.

· Reply
· 12h

John Tan
All appearances are like a finger drawing a circle in thin air, mere occurrences. Even the solid vivid sensations of "hardness", appears (in zero dimension) but are no where to be found - unarisen.
2
· Reply
· 12h · Edited
Mr GG
The ultimate fairer is the free empty heart. And I am not being romantic but purely "technical". Where else are all burdens shed?

· Reply
· 2d

Mr AA
John Tan
I resonate very much with the investigation of our sense of localization, embodiment (feeling to be inside a body), physicality, direction / perspective ("I am here looking there"), etc. You seemed to touch it, when talking about "in-ness", "from" and existing "somewhere".
These are sensitive topics to me, as they relate to notions of space, solidity, etc. I like very much the line of inquiry "is experience happening anywhere?", for example.
Can you explore it a bit?
1

· Reply
· 1d · Edited

Mr GG
At this point I find it quite useful to resort to "being awareness" (I think you call it PCE?). Such awareness is seeing through the luminosity of "things". But this is still a "doing", right? The "problem" with this is that there is a subtle duality awareness/stuff-being-awared. Then some may come up with the notion that awareness is not other then what is being awared. That there is only awareness. And here, I guess, is where inherency comes in. Fundamentally, is there an awareness at all? Or such awareness was also jsut a skillful means, a pointer?
If there is not such inherent awareness, then what is here? Is there any kind of measurable dimension that could be established? etc...

· Reply
· 1d

John Tan
André
, what I am talking about is the phenomelogy of day to day mumdane experiences, nothing transcendental.
I'm merely looking at how mental constructs created by our language structures and social conventions define and shape our moment to moment of experiences.
When we say our body is having such and such sensations, the mind really thinks in terms of containment. When we try to search for the referent we called "body", we realized there is no "body" apart from the dancing and fluxing sensations. So again, there are no two parts -- body and sensations; what we designate as "body" is just these sensations.
Once the mind sees through this "body construct", the sense of "in-ness" also dissolves. Sensations are simply present, no where, zero dimension. Same for "self/Self" as a background.
Just this experiential taste of thorough deconstruction is enough to take up my whole life. 🤣
As a side note, in Taoism there is the art of "sit and forget" 坐忘. To sit and forget the "body" is difficult, to see through mental constructs is much easier once we get a hang of it and it is more penetrating and insightful.
Ok André, been chatting too much. Thks for the exchanges.
4

· Reply
· 16h · Edited

John Tan

Mr GG
to me, to be without dual is not to subsume into one and although awareness is negated, it is not to say there is nothing.
Negating the Awareness/Presence (Absolute) is to not let Awareness remain at the abstract level. When such transpersonal Awareness that exists only in wonderland is negated, the vivid radiance of presence are fully tasted as the transient appearances; zero gap and zero distance between presence and moment to moment of ordinary experiences and we realize that "presence" has always only been a convention for these vivid ordinary experiences.
Then mundane activities -- hearing, sitting, standing, seeing and sensing, become pristine and vibrant, natural and free.
3

· Reply
· 15h · Edited

Mr GG
John
, yes. Any single atom is it. And even all atoms of all universes together are not it. Tx!!
· Reply
· 5h” – A conversation with John Tan, 2020, Active/Inactive Mode of No-Self, Duration to Buddhahood, Etc

“André A. Pais yes essencelessness as "antidote" for the mind in confusion. Since conventional things are empty, they are neither same nor different but merely designated as same or difference. So emptiness of the conventional is ultimate. Hence look at the nature of the dream itself, not anything apart from the dreams. So to the gelug, the conventional and the emptiness of the conventional are enough, why the need for the cessation of the conventional? 😝

There are 2 parts imo:

1. The empty nature of the conventional is primordially free from notions of sameness and difference. So no need to have another state other than realising the nature of the conventional.
2. The implications and power of designations and its relationship with the mind.

The mind must clearly see both to willingly release and relief itself. Without this clear seeing, willingness does not arise and without this willingness, the mind can't let go.

But there is another part of the story. That relates to the unmade and unconditioned free from all conceptualities and notions that Geovani Geo promotes 😝. That must be clearly differentiated from "not thinking" or simply being "non-conceptual", nor is it a neutral state that immobilizes one's discernment.

The unmade, is not lost in the conventional and not gained in the non-conceptual -- no entry nor exit point. There is no training needed and no path to it; no ladder to climb and no goal to achieve, precisely as this is what natural spontaneity is not. Yet it is not a beyond state in wonderland, just the marvelous on spot appearances right in the

relative and day to day mundane activities. In the realm of natural spontaneity, whatever seen, heard, smelled, sensed and tasted are all unique masterpieces of art, magic and miraculous beyond descriptions.

But this should not deny one from the conventional and there is no way to deny the conventional. In the conventional and conceptual world, everything is "made" and "artificial". Since they are conventional and "created", there is journey to travel, conventions to learn, goals to achieve and most importantly, one needs to arise the wisdom, that can help us navigate, sort out and discern clearly the conventional and the ultimate.

So my last question, if ultimately you have to re-enter the conventional after transcending of the conceptual, do you end up like what the gelug says?🤣” – John Tan, 2021

What emptiness is NOT

• Emptiness is not a substance
• Emptiness is not a substratum or background
• Emptiness is not light
• Emptiness is not consciousness or awareness
• Emptiness is not the Absolute
• Emptiness does not exist on its own
• Objects do not consist of emptiness
• Objects do not arise from emptiness
• Emptiness of the "I" does not negate the "I"
• Emptiness is not the feeling that results when no objects are appearing to the mind
• Meditating on emptiness does not consist of quieting the mind
(Source: Non-Dual Emptiness Teaching, by Greg Goode)

John Tan added:

Emptiness is not a path of practice
Emptiness is not a form of fruition

“Right, because in recognition of dharmatā it is intimately known that phenomena have been non-arisen from the very beginning. Ergo, attempting to will phenomena to be empty is functioning through the presupposition that there is something which actually needs to become empty. In such an act, which is executed from the standpoint of mind, all that is accomplished is reification of a subject relating to an object, which means one has constructed a fixed reference point. In the eyes of Atiyoga, the view is stupid because it fails to recognize uncontrived dharmatā, and so the individual attempts to discover dharmatā through contrived effort.

For example; Jigme Lingpa states:

"Here the external forms that are perceived are not designated as empty of self. When emptiness is made an intellectual object, the form and emptiness aspects of the object arise in the intellect. However since the perceived forms have no intrinsic characteristics, those forms should not mix with the intellect. Therefore the statement, 'Emptiness is not other than form, nor form other than emptiness,' should be taken as an axiom"

He also states that from the standpoint of vidya; *"appearances are not cut with the razor of emptiness"*, rather, they are known to have been empty from the very beginning (although the definitive expression of their emptiness may not be ascertained until later in the path. Either way, the meditation of Dzogpa Chenpo is resting in uncontrived dharmatā).

"In the gol shor tshar gcod seng ge'i ngar ro, Jigme Lingpa enumerates four mistaken approaches to emptiness, which he calls the 'four ways of straying [shor sa bzhi].' These are borrowed from the Mahāmudrā tradition, where they are to be found at least as far back as Dagpo Tashi Namgyal (1512-87), who enumerates them in his Legshe Dawai Özer. They are: (i) straying into the condition where emptiness is an object of knowledge, (ii) straying into taking emptiness as the path, (iii) straying into taking emptiness as an antidote, and (iv) straying into taking emptiness as a seal."
- Sam Van Schaik” – Kyle Dixon, 2014, https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?t=15714&start=380

“The most common connotation of "nonduality" is "oneness" or "singularity." Many teachings state that everything is actually awareness; those teachings are nondual in the "oneness" sense in which there are no two things.

But there is another sense of "nonduality." Instead of nonduality as "oneness," it's nonduality as "free from dualistic extremes." This entails freedom from the pairs of metaphysical dualisms such as essentialism/nihilism, existence/non-existence, reification/annihilation, presence/absence, or intrinsicality/voidness, etc. These pairs are dualisms in this sense: if you experience things in the world in terms of ***one side*** of the pair, you will experience things in the world in terms of ***the other side*** as well. If some things seem like they truly exist, then other things will seem like they truly don't exist. You will experience your own self to truly exist, and fear that one day you will truly not exist. Emptiness teachings show how none of these pairs make sense, and free you from experiencing yourself and the world in terms of these opposites. Emptiness teachings are nondual in this sense.

For those who encounter emptiness teachings after they've become familiar with awareness teachings, it's very tempting to misread the emptiness teachings by substituting terms. That is, it's very easy to misread the emptiness teachings by seeing "emptiness" on the page and thinking to yourself, "awareness, consciousness, I know what they're talking about."

Early in my own investigations I began with this substitution in mind. With this misreading, I found a lot in the emptiness teachings to be quite ***IN***comprehensible! So I started again, laying aside the notion that "emptiness" and "awareness" were equivalent. I tried to let the emptiness teachings speak for themselves. I came to find that they have a subtle beauty and power, a flavor quite different from the awareness teachings. Emptiness teachings do not speak of emptiness as a true nature that underlies or supports things. Rather, it speaks of selves and things as essenceless and free. ”

~ Greg Goode, Non-dual Emptiness Teachings

“Emptiness and awareness are separate teachings. There are cases, such as Dzogchen and Scott Kiloby’s Living Realization teachings, where they are combined. But this is not always done.

What I find interesting is that either one of these paths, awareness, and emptiness, can function just fine without help from the other. Neither one needs the other. Neither one can be reduced to the other. Neither one requires an external standard that reconciles them. They don’t need to be reconciled any more than French and German need to be reconciled.”

~ Greg Goode http://www.liberationunleashed.com/resources/articles/the-emptiness-teachings/

“They [awareness and emptiness teachings] are separated as I said and require separate pointings. Dependent arising and emptiness is not pointing at awareness but we have to apply this knowledge to understand the nature of awareness. This is what I realized.” - John Tan, 2019

“Nondualism, as an ontological position, is foreign to all Buddhist teachings. Even the first verse of the rig pa khyu byug points this "The primal nature (prakṛti) of diversity is nondual." You cannot have a nondual nature of diversity if there is no diversity.

The nonbuddhist nondualism asserts that all phenomena are just one thing, "one without a second," and that all perception of diversity is a product of false consciousness. This ontological substance is called brahman, or shiva, whatever.

The term "nondual" in Buddhadharma refers to an absence of a pair, such as being and nonbeing, subject and object, pure and impure. Such pairs are not established. In absence of establishing existence, for example, there cannot be nonexistence. In absence of establishing a subject, there cannot be an object, and vice versa; and in absence of establishing purity, there cannot be impurity. But when we say these pairs are not established, we are not asserting there is some foundation or basis which itself established.” - Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2019

“Christian Krok Understanding “non-dual” in the Buddhist sense as pertaining to emptiness and non-arising is key.

If the nature of phenomena is free from extremes it is free from dual extremes hence “non-dual.”

Also dharmins and their respective dharmatā are neither the same nor different, hence “non-dual.”

As mentioned non-Buddhist non-duality is ontological because it concerns a single nature that is free of division... while “non-dual” in the Buddhist sense is epistemic because it relates to an accurate knowledge of phenomena. If that knowledge is absent then duality is perceived.” - Kyle Dixon, 2019

“Emptiness is not an Absolute. Unlike systems that teach an Ultimate Reality like Nirguna Brahman that is empty of all attributes except its own true existence as a changeless principle of consciousness, the emptiness of Prasangika Madhyamika does not establish emptiness to be inherently existing, let alone an Absolute. As emptiness simply means that any given conventional self and phenomena are empty of inherent existence by its own side (the import being that ALL self/Self and phenomena are only established via conventional imputation or dependent designation), it is merely a negation of the wrong way of understanding phenomena and not the positing of a certain position regarding how reality inherently exists as. Furthermore, emptiness too is empty: the **emptiness** of a cup **depends** on the conventional cup. Emptiness is not some singular inherently existing principle out of which all phenomena are made of or come from.

Under the system of Prasangika Madhyamika, nothing is left unscrutinized - be it emptiness, Awareness, Consciousness, Brahman, and so on. It demolishes all grounds and leaves no existents to cling on to. Unlike how the Vedantins mistakenly think: the Shunyata or Emptiness of Buddhism is not the via negativa way to arrive at the same ground that adherents of a ‘via positiva’ approach takes.

Here is a good article by Archaya Mahayogi Shridhar Rana Rinpoche (try to read this article in its entirety):

Excerpts: Madhyamika Buddhism Vis-a-vis Hindu Vedanta , https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2009/02/madhyamika-buddhism-vis-vis-hindu.html

"...However, the Buddhist ultimate truth is the absence of any such satta, i.e., and ultimately existing thing or ultimate reality. The significance of Shunyata is the absence of any real, independent, unchanging existence (svabhava) and that fact is the ultimate truth of Buddhism, which is diametrically opposite of the ultimate truth of the Hindu Atman-Brahman. So Shunyata or emptiness can never be via negativa, a negative way of describing the Atman-Brahman of Hinduism as Vinoba Bhave and such scholars would have us believe. The meaning of Shunyata found in Sutra, Tantra, Dzogchen and Mahamudra is the same and officially accepted by all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism (except those who adhere to the Shentong view) and that is the Prasangic emptiness of Chandrakirti, i.e., the unfindability of any true existence or simply unfindability (unupalabdhi).

...

Because the same language structure (be it Pali or Sanskrit) and the same analogies are used to express two different paradigms, many Vedantins or scholars of Buddhism with Vedantic backgrounds have been fooled into thinking Buddhist Madhyamika is a re-interpretation of Hindu Vedanta. For example, many like Vinova Bhave the guru revered by the late Prime minister of India Indira Gandhi, perceive Buddhism as a negative way to attain the same goal (via negativa), whereas Hindu Vedanta is the positive way (via positiva). Likes of Bhave and others argue that the Buddhists use negation, whereas the Vedantis use affirmation and therefore the Shunyata of Buddhism is a negative way of talking about the Brahman of the Vedanta.

The issue here is not via negative or positive, but rather approaching two different goals based on two different paradigms, or addressing two diametrically opposed answers to the burning issue of mankind developed from diametrically opposed paradigms. In fact, the Buddha, after engaging in long years of Brahmanic as well as Sramanic meditations, found the concept of Brahman (an ultimately real, unchanging, eternal substratum [paramartha satta] to this ephemeral transient world) inadequate to solve the basic issue of humanity, i.e., suffering (dukkha). He questioned the very existence of such an eternal substratum and also declared that a search for such an imagined Brahman (parikalpita atman) was a form of escapism and, therefore, not really spiritual but “Spiritual Materialism”.

Since the concept of Brahman, the truly existent (paramartha satta) is the very foundation of Hinduism (as a matter of fact some form of an eternal ultimate reality whether it is called God or Nature is the basis of all other religious systems). When Buddhism denies such an ultimate reality (paramartha satta) in any form, it cuts at the very jugular veins of Hinduism and all other Theistic systems. Therefore, it cannot be ontologically, epistemologically, and soteriologically said that Buddhism reforms Hinduism.

The affirmation of a ground (asraya) which is really existent (paramartha satta) and the denial that such an existent ground (satta) can be found anywhere, within or without, immanent or transcendent, are two diametrically opposed paradigms, not simply variation or reformations of each other. The Webster Dictionary defines re-form as ‘to amend or improve by change of form or removal of faults or abuse.’ The example I have given above of an eternal base without which Hinduism in its own language would be called atheistic (Nastik). Therefore, the denial (without any implied affirmation prasajya pratisheda) of such an eternally existing unchanging base by Buddhism cannot be said to be a reformation, but a deconstruction of the very roots of the Hindu thesis. That is why Buddhism is not a reformation of Hinduism but a paradigm shift from the foundations on which Hinduism is based.

Hindu scholastic polemics assert that without an ultimate eternal reality (pramartha satta), there can be no liberation from the changing, transient Samsara which is an illusion. Therefore, even though the Buddha denied such an ultimate reality, he could have meant only conceptually really existing reality/relative reality, not the eternal ultimate reality, which is beyond concepts. Otherwise there cannot be liberation. The fault with this kind of thinking is that it is measuring the thesis of the Buddha (which is no thesis), or interpreting the Buddha from within the Hindu paradigm, within which, an eternal ultimate reality (paramartha satta) is a necessity for soteriological purpose, i.e., for liberation as Samsara itself is merely an illusion (maya) and cannot liberate us. However the Buddha saw this as a necessary dead-end. Since according to the Buddha, there is no Brahman, such a concept being merely an acquired fabrication (parikalpana) learned from wrong (mithya) scriptures, hankering after or searching for such a Brahman leads nowhere, let alone liberation. Hence, the Buddhist paradigm if understood correctly, does not require an eternally existing something or other for liberation.

In Buddhism liberation is not about realizing such a ground but rather letting go of all grounds, i.e., realizing the “groundlessness” of Samsara which is not really an illusion per se but “like an illusion” (mayavat). As Nagarjuna puts it aptly in his Magnum Opus, Mulamadhyamakakarika ‘sarva drishti prahanaya yah saddharmam adeshayet.’ That is ‘the Buddha taught out of compassion the true dharma for the sake of letting go of all views.’ (Drishti Parikshya,

Investigation of view, chapter 27 verse 30). In the Theravadin Majjhima Nikaya, Dighanakha Sutta and the Aggivacchagotta Sutta , the Buddha himself says that ‘all others leave one view only to hold on to another view but the Tathagata let goes all view and does not grasp to any other view.’ The Phenopindopama Sutra states very clearly that the five aggregates (pancha skandha), which is the Samsara, is like a bubble, like foam, like an illusion. It does not say the five aggregates are an illusion but “like an illusion”. In fact, according to Buddhism, holding on to any ground is ignorance and is called innate clinging to the concept of a truly existing self (sahaja atman graha).

Therefore, in the Buddhist paradigm, it is not only ‘not necessary’ to have an eternal ground for liberation, but in fact, the belief in such a ground itself is part of the dynamics of ignorance. We now move to another major difference within the two paradigms...” - Soh, 2019

“To me, I'm a non-sectarian, so I am quite free not having prejudice for/against Theravada, Mahayana or Vajrayana. We get our experience and teaching to release, as well as to relief ourselves from our suffering from a great teaching.

To come to our understanding of what is the fundamental cause of our suffering, and the core teaching of Selflessness is not that straight forward. We experiment and test our paradigm to see if it works. It is a life experience and journey.

In my experience and journey, there is essential two paths. First is taking and seeking comfort in the ultimate and carrying it throughout, and the other, is looking into the fundamental core of suffering and understanding its nature. So there are basically these two - one relies on the essentialist practice that they need to have an ultimate, and the other says no... there is no need to, you just have to understand the nature of suffering. Therefore when we clearly see this, we realize that Buddhism is based on the latter, and the whole development of Theravada and Mahayana is based on such a system. Otherwise there is no difference from other (religions). As such it depends on an individual path and which core system one believes in.

For me, the essence view has in a certain sense proven to not be the way and I greatly appreciate the Buddha's path. To state otherwise would mean that Buddhism is using the view of an essence to solve suffering, which isn't true for me.” - John Tan, 2015, “What is an Authentic Buddhist Teaching?” https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2016/07/what-is-authentic-buddhist-teaching.html

Recognition of Appearances as One’s Empty Radiance Clarity

“You have to distinguish between seeing "inseparability" of clarity and emptiness from seeing clarity alone. That is when Mipham is talking about clarity, he is referring to empty clarity which is not the same as seeing Clarity as ultimate. Like when I tell you awareness is natural and free, it does not mean there is another extra awareness other than sound, thoughts, sensations, colors, smells... In other words, there is ongoing awaring in the form of sound, sensations, hardness, softness, coldness, emotions... etc. No awareness... As such we have the issue of saying it cannot be said to be clarity nor other than clarity. To refine and have deeper insight of clarity, therefore requires a paradigm

shift. Nothing is being transformed from this to that. Rather it is under what condition, this arises. And understand dependent arising is non-arisen to realize the nature of clarity/phenomena.” - John Tan, 2015

“Actually IMO, anatta is the true direct short cut of tasting one's empty clarity. But best not to link to Dzogchen.

I prefer to use my own terms and deconstruction method like seeing through mental constructs and training the mind to see in terms of DO *[dependent origination]*, emptiness and non-arisen of phenomena to further refine one's deconstruction practice.” – John Tan, 2020

As stated at the beginning and end of this guide, the 7 stages do not unfold in the same exact linear steps for everyone. For some, it is the reverse. For some practitioners, they may have certain insights into emptiness and dependent origination but lack the direct realization of appearances as one’s radiance clarity. And hence for these people, John Tan said, “...empty clarity is highest teaching. To me [that] is peak of [stage] 5. Post 5 [i.e. stage 6] is [about] knowledge of Dependent Origination and emptiness, which I think is more [of a crucial] key. Roaming in Conventional world in freedom requires deep wisdom that is not covered in the insight of clarity.”. However as John also pointed out, lacking the insights into 5, the understanding of dependent origination and emptiness tends to be intellectual. For these people, a separate pointing to recognise all appearances as one’s empty radiance clarity may be necessary.

[1/8/23, 12:14:20 PM] John Tan: Yes I agree. Because many understand from essential view and thought they understood freedom from all elaborations. If it contradicts DO [dependente origination], then the view is essential view like what Tsongkhapa said.

Means there is no contradiction between spontaneous presence and dependent arising.

Also when one deconstruct, there are 2 authentications; one relates to de-construction of conceptual mind and the other is recognizing and directly tasting the empty radiance.
[1/8/23, 12:15:44 PM] John Tan: Whether, we deconstruct self, internality-externality, physicality, cause-effect, we must have this direct taste of radiance and relates to the actual taste.

.....

[27/8/23, 9:29:26 AM] John Tan: 👍

Not only that you cannot realize emptiness without the clarity, you cannot realize dependent origination without clarity, they are both talking about radiance and light.

Another important point is we do not realize that we are analysing and understanding from the perspective from essential view. We "negate" from the standpoint of an essential view; we understand dependent arising from an inherent view without realizing it. We do not understand from the perspective of light and radiance.

They understand "illusion" from an essential view and thought that because of illusoriness, it is inconsequential.

.....

[8/9/23, 2:26:14 PM] John Tan: I suggest you look into DO, emptiness and understand the non-contradiction between free from all elaborations and DO-emptiness of the conventional.

It is not easy to understand functioning in the non-essential way of manifestations.

Even if one is clear of how the mind confuses itself with essential view in terms reification of entities-characteristics, it does not mean one can understand how empty radiance functions in the non-essential way.

This requires not only stable insights but also very stable authentication of energy and radiance patterns -- that the natural expressions of empty radiance exhibits certain patterns.

[8/9/23, 2:35:06 PM] John Tan: For example, you think it is so easy to come out the 12 afflictive chain of DO?
[8/9/23, 2:36:49 PM] John Tan: This requires very stable insight and radiance experience and observe how a mind in confusion sets the wheel of samsara in action.
[8/9/23, 2:42:06 PM] John Tan: Do you think it is so easy to point out consciousness and phenomena are like the 8 similes of illusions? Or despite vivid appearances, there is nothing that is "there" at all, no "thingness" can be found at all and because of this empty nature, whole of samsara as well of the immense diversities of radiance can manifest? How skillful is it in that pointing? Yet we just simply read pass such profound pointing. .....

“Once you understand, then MMK becomes clear. Like sprout and plant, plant and tree; like growing and decaying; every object, every phenomenon, every line of demarcation identified is empty.

Having this understanding, we look into our own mind. When we look into mind, there is no mind other than the ongoing appearances. When you look into appearances, there is no appearances either, it is just one's radiance clarity.

Therefore without insight into emptiness, we do not know the nature of mind/phenomena; consequently, no true realization of clarity. Clarity is empty and anatta insight is the first taste of this knowledge of emptiness. Applying this insight of emptiness on clarity and appearances, the relationship of emptiness, clarity and appearances is fully understood. Rest is just day to day authentication of this truth. There is no ending to it.”

- John Tan, 2019

“From anatta to the natural state of spontaneous perfection is essentially to understand the breadth and depth of what

hinders and is meant by being "natural". The journey is effectively how an immature mind that is full of all sort of artificialities frees itself into its primordial natural condition that is boundless and free.

Why are there stages? There are stages because it is based on a proliferated mind. The fragmented mind creates stages as that is how it understands and works, it separates and re-connects what that has never been separated. Realizing the illusion of separation, there is no re-connection either. So the self is empty, the other is empty, the line that demarcates them is also empty.

As for investigation into the nature of appearances, perhaps you can elaborate more on what do you mean by appearances?

I think we must also separate direct knowledge of one's empty clarity from the relative conceptual knowledge of mind and how are they "linked". Can Madhyamaka bring about direct recognition of one’s radiance clarity? If not, what is the role of mmk (mulamadhyamakakarika)?

...

In my previous message, I mentioned about anatta and spontaneous perfection as returning to one's natural and authentic condition because I hope you can see it from another angle.

To some, in the seen, just the seen sounded like a perfect state of concentration through long period of training and practice. To me however, the taste of anatta is the birthright, primordial and natural condition of one's clarity.

Seeing is just seen, no seer; Hearing is just sound, no hearer. It is the gateway to realize that the mundane is precisely where one's natural radiance is fully expressed. Nothing hidden, nothing beyond and fully manifested.

What does freedom from reification entail? It is to get rid of all "beyonds", all "backgrounds", all constructs so that we can recognize "face to face" of what's seen, heard, touched... etc as one's empty clarity, not to bring us to an unreachable la la land. So wherever and whenever I see dependent arising and emptiness, I see one's empty clarity.

Some can realize directly one's empty clarity through seeing emptiness, just like case of the insight of anatta, but some can't. If this isn't obvious, then separate pointing is necessary.

Lastly the true practice is in ceaselessly meeting conditions and situations, without that, there is no genuine actualization.

Good luck!” - John Tan 2018

...

"When one says mind or basis or clarity or presence, it is only conventional expression. If we mistaken there is anything to grasp or anything beyond or ineffable, it is immediately mistaken. However if we just stop there it becomes nihilistic. Because the purpose is to allow one to clearly and fully realize, feel and taste the moment to moment of manifestation. To clearly see and understand the nature of what is felt, seen, taste, heard and thought. It is not only no seer, but in the seen just the seen. However in the seen just the seen can be seen as a form of focus shamatha concentration. Therefore I always say it is the natural state." - John Tan 2018

John also wrote in 2007,

"The understanding 'of arising as yuan (conditions)' must be factored to all aspects of our lives. Applying this insight to the six stages of my experiences, you must see them not as indications of stages at all. There are no higher or lower stages, all merely serves as conditions for ‘new insight’ to arise. A practitioner may start from training himself to ‘witness’ the empty nature of phenomena (stage 6) yet still having a clear distinction of observer and observed being dual; but the gradual loosening of ‘solidity’ of all internal or external phenomena having no inherent existence will slowly leads to the non-dual experience."

"Here the highlight must not only be the empty nature of ‘sound’ alone, that luminosity as ‘sound’ must similarly be emphasized. When we stripped-off the symbolic representation of ‘bird’, ‘chirping’, ‘outside’, ‘eyes-organ’, ‘ears-organs’, ‘sensate reality’ and merely experience in bare, this is the meditative state of intuitively knowing that quality of being luminous in oneness. Oneness as there is nothing to divide when devoid of these symbolic layering. The depth of the crystal clarity of that pure experience – ‘chirping’ is not what language can convey. The point here is not to bring about a scientific study on the topic of qualia but to have a direct feel of the full absorption in the delight of that clear-luminosity of ‘sound’. It is the ‘depth and degree’ of absorptive-clarity yet non-staying that is most important; not the symbolic understanding of meanings.

“[5:23 PM, 4/5/2020] John Tan: The mind has the habits of seeing whatever appears as entities and things. So it first tells us that this habit and tendency must be overcome. Then it talks about the nature of mind which is quite different from my usage as I directly and literally translate "nature" from the Chinese character 性 (Soh: Nature). So nature of mind to me is emptiness 空性 (Soh: Empty Nature) and not "clarity".

Second it spoke of we must realize and identify this "nature of mind" directly, so what it means here by "nature of mind" sounded to me like "明心" (Soh: Apprehending Mind) rather than 见性 (Soh: Seeing Nature). Therefore when you read, you have to discern correctly.

Next is what has directly experiencing mind (referred in the book as "nature of mind") got to do with mistaking things as true existence and mistaking there is Self/self? Why are things perceived as illusion got to do with "nature of mind

(明心) (Soh: Apprehending Mind) here? This is the first question to ask. In fact post this experience of 明心 (Soh: Apprehending Mind), we become more attached to 心 (Soh: Mind). So this part must be carefully addressed.

So how should we practice? That is, is 明心 (Soh: Apprehending Mind) the way and is that wrong emphasis? If it is then it becomes awareness teaching.

So there are three parts:
1. 明心 (Soh: Apprehending Mind)
2. 见性 (Soh: Seeing Nature) as 悟性空 (Soh: Realizing Empty Nature)
3. Integrate the two

The integration is empty cognizance. yOYou can never find a constant something somewhere called Cognizant. So what and where is this cognizant?

Why can't why does it seems so evasive?

What has it got to do with non-dual experience?
[5:58 PM, 4/5/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. no cognizance in and of itself besides manifestation and aggregates, those aggregates are also empty, non arisen an illusionlike due to its essenceless nature.. not due to awareness

[6:04 PM, 4/5/2020] John Tan: Yes. So anatta is the experiential insight of this and therefore the direct, effortless presencing of every moment. The view and teaching must make this clear.”

It should however be understood that recognition of all appearances as one’s empty-clarity is not the insight of Stage 6. As John Tan said, “They [Gelugpas/Emptiness teachings] do not require a ground foundational consciousness, do not seek presence, what do they rely on to release?
Soh: The release of the sense of phenomena truly there that can be found when sought, existing with Essence, by itself or on its own side. The conventions are seen to be empty
John Tan: 👍 So in phase 6, don't talk about presence. Talk about the general dependent origination into emptiness. In terms of experience, fully refine +A and -A.”

“Purpose of DO and emptiness is not to subsume all into mind but to negate any sort of inherentness. That is to realise primordial, unconditioned nature of whatever arises.

Knowing mind (clarity) is not knowing the nature of mind and the nature of mind is not for knowing nor can it be known, learned or studied, that is why it is purging of all views. It can however be expressed as a negation of all inherent-ness. Free from all substantialities and extreme, there is just unconditioned expression in natural spontaneity.

Like the previous texts you posted about the "one life". I think I have discussed this with you before in our early conversations.

We must differentiate and discern experience free from a background and source.

What happened when the background is gone? There is the non-doership aspect and the luminous clarity aspect.

Abscribing all as life is an extrapolation as I told you before. There is no need to create an alternate source call "one life". The experienced as being lived by and expression of life is just an experience of non-doership due to freedom from background source. However one must still be able to discern correct what is unconditioned expression and what is karmic habituation.” – John Tan, 2020

“When you are free from all views, there is just natural spontaneity free from all elaborations. When engaged in the relative and conventional world, see everything as dependently originated, which is naturally balanced and perfected.” – John Tan, 2021

...

John Tan wrote in 2012/2013:

“In ignorance, there is hearer hearing sound.
In anatta, in hearing, only sound.
Yet sound has no true inherent nature (empty),
It is an activity and is that very activity called “hearing”.
Both “hearing and sound” are pointing to the same activity.
Only when seen to have true existence on either side does confusion arise.

In Madhyamaka Emptiness, reification is seen through.
Yet the experiential state of freedom from reification is not expounded.
However, one can have a taste of that freedom from arising insight of anatta since anatta is precisely the freedom from reification of Self/self (First fold Emptiness).
In anatta, seeing is simply the full scenery, in hearing only sound...
thus, always only lights, shape, colors, sounds, scents... in clean purity.
Emptying the object further (second fold) is merely dissolving subtle bond of “externality” that creates the appearance of true existence of objects outside. When “externality” is deconstructed, it is effectively a double confirmation of anatta...
...innerly coreless and outwardly empty, all appearances are still simply sound, lights, colors and rays
In thorough deconstruction, as there is no layer that reifies, there is no conceptuality. Therefore no complication, no confusion, no stains, no boundaries, no center, no sense of dual..
no sense of activity... just self arising.
All collapse into a single sphere of natural presence and spontaneous simplicity.

Whatever appears is
neither here nor now,
Neither in nor out,
Neither arises nor ceases,
In the same space...
non-local, timeless and dimensionless
Simply present...

To Mr. J:
The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space water...
is the place where the earth, fire, wind, space and water kills “You” and fully shines as its own radiance, a complete taste of itself and fully itself.

Lastly, it is interesting to get to know something about Dzogchen, however the jargons and tenets are far beyond me.
Just wrote due to a sudden spurt of interest, nothing intense.
Thanks for all the sharing and exchanges.
Gone!”

“The knowing is precisely the known and vice versa.
Only in ignorance does the knowing appear to co-locate with the known.
If both are realized as mere conventions that arise in dependence of the other,
Then the middle way that severs the extremes can be understood”

...

[9:28 AM, 4/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: I explained i am already way past the phase of i amness realisation in spiritual enlightenment

There is no self within, awareness is just right there where everything is (something like that)

I was very expressive in explaining:

In the seeing, just colors
In the hearing, just sound

Best of all i am free
There is no center within and no circumference without

i also had a plan to explain to him that while i do not see essence in phenomena it does not mean i subsume everything into consciousness

Everything is like a chariot so besides the functioning and aggregation of dependent arising on display an “it” essence cannot be found within or without it

That does not mean therefore everything exists only inside some consciousness or some subjectivity

Nor does an essence reside outside in objectivity to be found

It just means besides these empty dependent aggregation in function/appearance/operation an essence cannot be found

So experientially everything is just very vivid and yet essenceless like a mirage or reflection

“[9:34 PM, 4/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: [quoted a few pages from The Fearless Lion’s Roar: Profound Instructions on Dzogchen, the Great Perfection, on the Four Strayings: “The straying point of emptiness’s having the character of a knowable object, The straying point of taking emptiness as the path, The straying point of taking emptiness as a remedy, The straying point of superimposing emptiness.”] This just reminded me of what A wrote
[9:34 PM, 4/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: From what A wrote he seems to take emptiness as a remedy
[9:35 PM, 4/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: This seems intellectual.. rather than directly realising whatever appears as empty clarity
[9:38 PM, 4/18/2020] John Tan: Yes. Whatever appears as empty clarity is the whole purpose the teaching imo. How do you understand this with DO and emptiness? How does it help?
[10:10 PM, 4/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: It’s like what i said about the chariot.. whatever appears does not exist in and of itself.. also doesn’t mean nonexistent.. but rather like chariot merely manifest and functions in dependence but ultimately unfindable. Phenomena may be reified as objectively existent before and even after anatta... but if one realises all directly perceivable phenomena is of the nature of being like chariot, essenceless and dependently originating, but not truly originating.. then whatever appears are vividly seen as a self luminous display of total exertion yet empty or free of the sense of existence and nonexistence, arising and ceasing, etc
[10:13 PM, 4/18/2020] John Tan: Yes. From experience, there are 2 effects like I always tell you, one is freeing the mind from essence and substance view, the other is the actual expression of the nature of whatever appears.”

“[1:00 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: However if post anatta and non-dual, it helps one to penetrate further. Like how it helps me to understand the nature of clarity. But having an intellectual understanding of emptiness. How to relook at phenomena and mind and meditate on them. You will breakthrough further. When you look at a sensation, hear a sound, taste or vision. When you know emptiness, you have deeper understanding. When you go through mmk and understand more and more about chariot..
You see and directly authenticate more and more of mind and phenomena.

[1:04 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: It will loosen the coventional grip on us and deepen our understanding.

[1:05 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Emptiness has another dimension if you practice diligently.

[1:05 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: It is not just walking in park and appreciate space like openness in non-dual mode.

[1:08 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: Now having non-dual experience or a state of no-mind does not mean finality. We must also free ourselves from many more intellectual obscurations. other obscurations of cause. Like having non-dual or no-mind may not free on from the notion of self. Freeing one from the notion of self, may not free one from the notion of cause. Freeing one from the notion of cause, may not free one from the notion of existence. Freeing one from duality, may not free one from non-duality. The color you see is neither inside, nor outside. It is inside, it is also outside. It is private, it is also public.

So it is neither too.
[1:14 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: So freedom from insight is different from a blank state. So in addition to walking in a park, being anatta, borderless and open, non-dual and total exerted, you must also spend time to free up further intellectual obscurations that blind us.
[1:18 AM, 5/16/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. through mmk?
[1:19 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: The chariot analogy is enough...but the diamond splitter, neither one nor many...all these ways of ultimate analysis that see through essence can help also. But simple looking and understanding the chariot analogy helps me a lot...it depends on individual. Then authenticate it with your actual experience in anatta.

[1:23 AM, 5/16/2020] John Tan: To me it is not to help resolve that appearances are just one's empty clarity but helps to refine my insight on the nature... Our conventional knowledge has cage used into seeing a separate, divided physical and mental world. The knowledge blinds and bind us to an assumed reality that is not easy to break.”

“Clearing intellectual obscurity actually requires quite some shamata concentration that enables the mind to see clearly experience and how the conceptual mind process in a slow motion. It is like anatta but more complex issues are seen clearly in real time.

...

One can be free from subject and object division in experience, but one may not be free from mind-matter duality. There is intellectual mind/matter duality block despite experience being non-dual and anatta. Freedom from duality in experience does not mean you are free from mind/matter duality and the relationship between them.” – John Tan, 2020

“[12:51 AM, 5/14/2020] John Tan: Yeah I read it. Reflection. Like chariot. Neither exist nor not exist. Neither cause

nor uncaused. Neither here nor not here. Neither arise nor not arise.

When you see that there is mind creating mental activities, you see deluded appearances as there is mind and there are mental activities. When you see through mind, you also see through mental activities. When you see through them, there is natural and pure appearances. In Buddhism language, we say mind is empty and so are the mental activities. Like in the case of seer seeing the seen. Hearer hearing sound.

Now what is important is the actual taste, emptiness is not enough, clarity also not enough, non-dual also not enough. It is not only non-dual, it is also not just emptiness, it is also not just clarity. So most crucial is the wisdom to penetrate all these and taste directly pure appearance. It is all these characteristics... vivid, clean, pure, luminous, non-dual appearances that cannot be be found anywhere. This of course is non-conceptual but non-conceptual is never the goal. So when hearing sound, that sound must be tasted fully then the teaching becomes alive. You should not meddle in text but express in your own words the living experiences.”

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
[10:03 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: To me subject-action-object is just a structure to help articulate and make sense of the world. I do not see it that way. I see it as total exertion of appearance-conditions, not appearance and conditions.
[10:10 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: You are referring to td unmanifest?
[10:47 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Yes
[10:49 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: If you see object separated from subject or see phenomena apart from mind, no matter how you deconstruct, it is just knowledge. you won't have direct taste of anything.
[10:52 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: But not all conditions are appearing right, some are simply intuited or inferred even when unseen.. so they are merely conventional
[10:53 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Of course, there is no way to know all conditions involved.
[10:54 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: It is simply to say appearance do not just manifest.
[10:56 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: There is also the experience of spaciousness when you go through the process of deconstructing both subject and object...the experience is like mind body drop.
[11:04 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you say, the car is empty but you are sitting inside it...what do you mean?
[11:05 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: It is same as no wind is blowing...
[11:05 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Or lightning flashing
[11:07 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Or spring goes, summer comes...
[11:09 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Means you apply the same insight to everything
[11:09 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Only only the self...
[11:10 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Even movement
[11:13 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: So your mind is perpetually seeing through constructs, so what happens?
[11:16 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Tell me when you say car is empty yet you are sitting on it. you see through the cosntruct, then what happened?
[11:16 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you see through the wind that is blowing...what happened?

[11:16 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you see through summer or weather? What happened?
[11:17 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Or I say lightning is flashing, when you really see through that lightning...
[11:19 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: is just the mere appearance.. no reifications
[11:19 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Don't think, experience it...
[11:19 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: you are force into non-conceptuality
[11:21 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Like PCE experience...in fact very mindful and watchful when you begin ... you begin to feel the blowing...correct...
[11:21 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When i say no lightning flashing... You look at the flashing
[11:24 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Correct? Have you actually practice or pay attention, not just blah out a sentence...
[11:25 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When you say no summer, you are experiencing the heat, humidity...etc
[11:26 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Means you see through the construct but you cannot just think
[11:27 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: When I say there is no car, I touch the car...what is it..must that ....the color...the leather, the wheels...
[11:28 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: If you constantly and perpetually into that ...what happened?
[11:34 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: You are talking about deconstruction of object and phenomena and I am telling you if you see through, what happens...if you only think, you would not understand...
[11:38 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: everything is just vibrant spontaneous presence but no subject or object
[11:39 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: like i dont see solid objects, but just shimmering vibrant colors as vivid empty presence
[11:39 PM, 7/27/2020] Soh Wei Yu: and sounds, sensations, etc
[11:41 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Yes
[11:42 PM, 7/27/2020] John Tan: Then it depends on the depth of experiencing the sensation or appearances themselves

TD Unmanifest
This is very helpful, thank you. I've just returned from a walk, and used these pointers to feel into what is being pointed to. I was too focused on the deconstruction of objects vs feeling / seeing the direct vibrancy. Many thanks Soh
, and please pass on my thanks to John Tan.
1
· Reply
· 3m”

Representation and Presentation

Soh Wei Yu
Admin

JT： “What Albert said about representation and presentation is very apt. There is a big difference in talking about:
1. freedom from all elaborations/conceptualities -- representation and
2. freedom from all elaborations/conceptualities from without self-nature perspective -- presentation.”

2

Geovani Geo

JultSyp odm10rmied ·
Soh, in another thread you mention one-mind and no-mind. Lets go over that again, just for fun. There is the Only-Mind step (that you call one mind). Then, as all is Mind and Mind is also Mind you have No-Mind. Its the seeing that there isn't "something" binding the totality, or that Dharmakaya is the ever present, unborn, no-space that allows seeming manifestatioin, its not some "substance". What is next? Anatta? In quick words, is that the absence of self, the absence of doership?

48 Comments

Albert Hong
It’s all there is you’re ruthlessly objective and want to know. Learn the terms not how you know it but how the author is expressing it. Meaning they are saying something very specific.

1
Geovani Geo
Author
Albert Hong, there is something "new" in dealing with these issues anew. We all know the basics, but in a ping-pong dialogue, without copying and pasting, the dynamism may bring in "something" different, not seen before. If you prefer to exchange prints - go for it buddy.

-

Albert Hong
Geovani Geo when you read something there is constant relationship to what you read. It isn’t a dead thing.

2

-

Geovani Geo
Author
That is right. There are different kinds of communication, not jsut one.

-

Soh Wei Yu
Admin

Even to express it as “allowing manifestation” implies a container of manifestation. There is no container. Manifestation is dharmakaya, thats all. That is anatta, then there are two aspects of it expressed in the two stanzas.

2
Albert Hong
Soh Wei Yu the problem is this deep tendency to reify.
It isn't particularly clear that one can make a distinction say between movement and stillness.
People say manifestation arises from space. Or movement arises from stillness.
It isn't clear that there is a holding onto stillness and dualizing it from motion.
If there are two things then that is dualism pure and simple.
And yet if we merge that stillness and movement into a single formless substance then we fall into Monism and inherent view again.
There is a deep tendency for the mind to desire wholeness or oneness. It is very alluring and beautiful to the mind.

4

-

Albert Hong
in seeing, no seer. in hearing, no hear. if we just contemplate that then you'd instantly get that there is no extra witness, or space, or container, or self.

2

  -

Christine Walsh
Albert Hong I contemplated just that for years and did not instantly get it. Just sayin'...😁

1

- Geovani Geo
  Author
  Yea.. this is the kind of subtlety that is interesting do converse about. There is a point here that is very difficult to express. Its about that wich is naturally not ever absent. But expressed in this way it seems to be something. But it is not! Take 3D-space as an analogy. Is there a thing called space? No. It is originally there, right? The same line of pointing can be extended to the Dharmakaya.

  - Albert Hong
    Geovani Geo from what I understand. space is just the luminosity extending infinitely everywhere all the time. literally the motion of luminosity creates space. but it also creates all the elements and all appearance as well. Yet there is no space as a referent. Nor is there luminosity as a referent. Nothing can be pinned down as a thing. But we can understand things as endless relations in a conventional/nominal way.
    But people who practice have this experience of a space and then there is arising of stuff from that space. And that experience has within it a series of assumptions.

    - Jenny Jennings Foerst
      Albert Hong People cannot profitably skip the totalizing-Space phase, but it is only a phase, if one keeps practicing. Luminosity more likely to be recognized if Space phase comes first. I know you know, just mentioning for others.

      1

- Jenny Jennings Foerst
  Space is, yes, a set of assumptions, a construct. So is time, yet time also seems to keep going, so the "beyond" of that construct is especially tricky in that "beyond-ness" is what is in question. So immediacy, but time travel is possible, too.

- Albert Hong
  I've heard teachings on the distinction between a presentation verses a representation. And it's a useful way to understand appearance. Appearance or Form is exactly itself. Exactly a presentation of itself. It isn't a

representation like say a still life painting of an orange. There is the actual orange (referent) and the symbol/representation of the orange. This the traditional finger pointing to the moon analogy. But this is also incorrect because there is only ever presentation.
So even the painting of the orange, which isn't the actual orange is itself a presentation of itself. And the orange is as well.
When we focus on lets say the presence. then it isn't clear that presence isn't a thing but the very presentation of form.
And form is nothing but constant activity. So form is forming. Presence is presencing. They aren't distinct.
But when we reify presence. Then it seems presence is something and everything else is soemthing else. Then we have to naturally unify everything with this presence.
But that is incorrect because everything is already exactly itself as forming/presencing.

6

- Albert Hong
So there is no need to emphasize presence as a thing. or even as something special. because it is exactly the forms.

- Albert Hong
If you reify a background. Lets say an absence of a background. Then you make that a reference point in relationship to everything else.
So it feels and is experienced as an emanationist theory of sorts. Something arises from nothing. Even if it seems non dualistic. You are making a distinction in experience between the two. something and nothing. arising and non arising.

1

- Geovani Geo
Author
Yes, that is right.

- Geovani Geo
Author

Movement and stillness cannot be separated. Existence and no-existence neither.

- Geovani Geo
  Author
  "Yet there is no space as a referent. Nor is there luminosity as a referent."
  This is what I meant when used space as an analogy. Space is not something. To say its there makes no sense jsut as to say it is not. Both make it a thing.

  - Albert Hong
    In how people use language when speaking about spiritual or meditative experience, it is common. How people use language is also how they shape their perception, which shapes their responses/actions. It

    1

- Albert Hong
  It is a whole package. So reification of space, of nothingness, of a container, of something formless as distinct from something else.
  It is very common for meditators.

- Albert Hong
  More common then that is the Monist variant of taking formless presence as the single source of everything.
  Pretty much all the conversation on here. Is nothing but the endless distinctions between IAM, ONE MIND and NO MIND.
  And how Anatta is a distinct realization.

  1
  Mr. RDT
  Albert Hong very true Al. You can often see where the people are at by how they express themsleves.

- Albert Hong
  Mr. RDT yeah. language is how we shape everything. Nama-Rupa. Name and form are the same.

- Mr. RDT
  Albert Hong true. If people dont want to release their clinging they will often make argument along the lines of "this is (my) experience" or "I know this from experience". I mean of course you do. Our view shapes our world.

-
- Soh Wei Yu
  Admin
  JT： “What Albert said about representation and presentation is very apt. There is a big difference in talking about:
  1. freedom from all elaborations/conceptualities -- representation and
  2. freedom from all elaborations/conceptualities from without self-nature perspective -- presentation.”

  2

- Soh Wei Yu
  Admin
  Reminded of what i wrote in 2012
  https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../buddha-dharma-dream...
  Buddha-Dharma: A Dream in a Dream
  (Above: Ted Biringer's book)
  Like always, Ted Biringer have interesting and well written postings.
  Just like to add a short comment:
  Dogen here relates nyo (“like”), to ze (“this”), evoking the familiar Zen association nyoze (“like this,” “thusness”). He goes on to draw the implication that “like this” signifies not mere resemblance but the nondual identity of symbol and symbolized. He thus rejects any dualistic notion of metaphor or simile (hiyi), whereby an image points to, represents, or approximates something other than itself. Rather, for Dogen, the symbol itself is the very presence of total dynamism, i.e., it presents.
  Hee-Jin Kim, Flowers of Emptiness, note 8, p.251
  I could think of one example: people liken “Buddha-nature” to be “like the moon”.

In actuality, the very appearance of the moon is buddha-nature, it is not that there is some hidden thing called buddha-nature which merely resembles the moon. The moon is buddha-nature, the buddha-nature is the moon, the nondual identity of symbol and symbolized. Or as Dogen says, the moon-face buddha and sun-face buddha, the whole body is the whole moon. There is nothing hidden or latent about it, there is no hidden noumenon in which phenomenon or symbols can “point to” or “hint at”. The symbol, e.g. the moon, is itself the very presence of total dynamism. Furthermore, manifestation does not 'come from' Buddha-nature, nor does Buddha-nature 'contains' manifestation, Buddha-nature is empty of a self but conventionally imputed on the "myriad forms". Likewise for Truth, Awareness, etc.

In fact everything is like this.

Scent of a flower is not scent of “a flower”, the scent does not represent or approximate something other than itself but is a complete reality (well not exactly a 'reality' but rather a whole and complete manifestation/appearance which is empty and unreal) in itself: the scent IS the flower, wheel of a car is not wheel of “a car”, the car IS the wheel. Wheel cannot be said to "come from a car" or "be contained by a car". The word “car” is a mere imputation, not a true reality that can be established. “Self” and aggregates are likewise.

Seen in such manner, all constructs are deconstructed and what's left is just the shimmering "dream-like" (coreless, empty, illusory), luminous appearances which is all there is, but not to be confused with a dreamy state.

Anyway this is Ted's new post:

http://dogenandtheshobogenzo.blogspot.sg/.../buddha...

Friday, June 01, 2012

Buddha-Dharma: A Dream in a Dream

On the True Nature of the Self...

The final belief is to believe in a fiction, which you know to be a fiction, there being nothing else. The exquisite truth is to know that it is a fiction and that you believe in it willingly.

Wallace Stevens

The appearance of buddhas and ancestors in the world, being prior to the emergence of any incipient sign, has nothing to do with old, narrow opinions. This accounts for the virtues of buddha-ancestors, as of going beyond the Buddha. Unconcerned with time, the life-span [of buddha-ancestors] is neither prolonged nor momentary, as it is far from the comprehension of ordinary minds.

The ever turning wheel of the Dharma is also a principle prior to the emergence of any incipient sign; as such, it is an eternal paragon with immeasurably great merit. [Buddha-ancestors] expound this as a dream in a dream. Because they see verification within verification, it is known as expounding a dream in a dream.

The place where a dream is expounded in a dream is indeed the land and assembly of buddha-ancestors. The buddha-land and buddha-assembly, the ancestral way and ancestral seat, are all verification founded upon verification, hence all are the expounding of a dream in a dream. Upon encountering their utterances and discourses, do not think that these are not of the buddha-assembly; they are the Buddha’s turning the wheel of

the Dharma. Because this wheel of the Dharma turns in all directions, the great oceans and Mt. Sumeru, the lands and buddhas are all realized. Such is expounding a dream in a dream, which is prior to all dreams.
The entire world, crystal-clear everywhere, is a dream; and a dream is all grasses [things] clear and bright. To doubt the dream state is itself to dream; all perplexity is a dream as well. At this very moment, [all are] grasses of the “dream state,” grasses “in” [a dream], grasses“expounding” [a dream], and so on. Even as we study this, the very roots and stalks, leaves and branches, flowers and fruits, lights and hues [of our perception] are all a great dream. Never mistake this, however, for a dreamy state.
Dogen, Shobogenzo, Muchu-setsumu (Expounding a dream in a dream), Trans. Hee-Jin Kim, Flowers of Emptiness, p.279-280
It’s a wonderful, wonderful opera. Only it hurts.
Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth (with Bill Moyers)
Dogen here relates nyo (“like”), to ze (“this”), evoking the familiar Zen association nyoze (“like this,” “thusness”). He goes on to draw the implication that “like this” signifies not mere resemblance but the nondual identity of symbol and symbolized. He thus rejects any dualistic notion of metaphor or simile (hiyi), whereby an image points to, represents, or approximates something other than itself. Rather, for Dogen, the symbol itself is the very presence of total dynamism, i.e., it presents.
Hee-Jin Kim, Flowers of Emptiness, note 8, p.251
If the new empirical results are taken seriously, then people throughout our culture have to rethink some of their most cherished beliefs about what science and philosophy are and consider their values from a new perspective...
If conceptual metaphors are real, then all literalist and objective views of meaning and knowledge are false. We can no longer pretend to build an account of concepts and knowledge on objective, literal foundations. This constitutes a profound challenge to many of the traditional ways of thinking about what it means to be human, about how the mind works, and about our nature as social and cultural creatures.
George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By, p.273
Allegory and metaphor both start off saying one thing as if it were another. But where allegorical method divides this double talk into two constituents – latent and manifest – and requires translation of manifest into latent, the metaphorical method keeps the two voices together, here the dream as it tells itself, ambiguously evocative and concretely precise at each and every instant. Metaphors are not subject to interpretive translation without breaking up their peculiar unity... Since symbols and metaphors cannot be translated, another method for understanding dreams is needed, a method in which masks, disguises, and doubleness inherently belong, a method that is itself metaphorical.
...if the dream is psychic nature per se, unconditioned, spontaneous, primary, and this psychic nature can show a dramatic structure, then the nature of the mind is poetic. To go to the root human ontology, its truth, essence, and nature, one must move in the fictional mode and use poetic tools.
James Hillman, Healing Fiction, pp35-36 [italics Hillman’s]
Peace,
Ted

Labels: Anatta, Emptiness, Ted Biringer, Zen, Zen Master Dogen |

AWAKENINGTOREALITY.COM
Buddha-Dharma: A Dream in a Dream
Buddha-Dharma: A Dream in a Dream

1

- Geovani Geo
  Author
  Albert Hong writes, "So it feels and is experienced as an emanationist theory of sorts. Something arises from nothing. Even if it seems non dualistic. You are making a distinction in experience between the two. something and nothing. arising and non arising."
  This is interesting. Could you elaborate on the emanationist thing?
  Please dont press the answer button. Lets stay on this main thread or soon my PC looses you.

- Albert Hong
  Basically it is a theory and experience of people that there is an underlying reality of sorts. A Godhead or an Absolute.
  Be it a void. Be it a subtle light realm. Be it presence. There are endless flavors of pretty much the same thing.
  You have a circle. and from that circle arises a dot. From that dot arises endless dots.
  0 to 1 to 2 to 10,000 things.
  Taoism has its own version. The Christians have their own version.

- Albert Hong
  And though it is a theory. Views shape experiences. Experience is never apart from views. Even non conceptual experience has its basis in conceptual habit that forces a way of seeing.
  So we can always assume regardless of what is experience. Directly or not. It is bounded by the habitual momentum of latent conceptual impressions.
  And continually what we see. What I experience as well in my practice. IS this tendency to make a container. Or make a source.
  We can call it whatever we desire. Mind. Emptiness, Buddha. God. Reality. Self. Etc. It has endless symbolic representations.
  And we tend to overemphasize it. Because well its special. It seems spiritual. It seems like well better than everything else.

And in doing so we dualize that thing we cling to verses everyhting else.
And we get sophisticated and then say everything else is coming from there. or made of it. And we're okay with that. It seems to make sense.
But that whole thing is dualism. Lol

1
Albert Hong
I'm not even saying there isn't value in it. There is tremendous practical value and refining of mind and view.
But in the end if you have two things. Even if they are the same thing. And even if they are formless, absence.
No matter how you dress it up.
It is a cause of suffering because it is dualism.

-
- .

Reply

Labels: Albert Hong, Anatta, Emptiness |

The Four Levels of “The Place Where There is No Heat and Cold”

In the Zen koans, the place of no heat and cold refers to the peak of no-mind up to total exertion. But in light of the understanding of emptiness, we can now delineate four levels of The Place Where There is No Heat and Cold.

1) No cold and heat as either nirodha samapatti or nirvikalpa samadhi (forms of non analytical cessation)

Nirodha Samapatti and Nirvikalpa Samadhi are different, but both belong to the category of non-analytical cessations. In Kevala Nirvikalpa Samadhi, all sensory input and mental concepts are shut, only a formless Awareness remains. With training in meditative absorption, one can abide in Nirvikalpa Samadhi ‘at will’ in the I AM phase, and if the I AM Presence remains uninterrupted even in daily living it is considered ‘Sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi’ (although some explanations of Sahaja implies it is the realization of One Mind). In my understanding, I AM realization fits the criteria for Sahaja nirvikalpa samadhi since there is no longer the sense that the I AM can be lost after Self-Realization, even amidst the chaos of daily life. The formless absorption in Nirvikalpa Samadhi merely serves to intensify the experience of I AM by shutting off other sensory input and concepts, but one’s realization of Self remains unshaken even without entering into a special state of samadhi after the I AM realization.

Whereas, in Nirodha Samapatti (an attainment discussed in the Pali Suttas and Theravada Buddhism at length), as well as MCTB Fruition/Burmese Style cessation, as well as John Tan Stage 3 (Entering into Nothingness), even consciousness is shut and any form of awareness of 'anything' is experienced only after emerging from that state. However, both are temporary forms of absorption and does not entail the liberation from one’s afflictions and causes of affliction (known as taints, kleshas, etc).

These samadhi states - Nirodha Samapatti, Nirvikalpa samadhi, Fruitions, John Tan Stage 3, etc are various forms of non-analytical cessations.

What is the difference between analytical and non-analytical cessation? Analytical cessation (i.e. Nirvana) refers to the permanent cessation of the emotional afflictions, primarily passion, aggression and delusion, and their latent tendencies giving rise to these afflictions through the release and cessation of ignorance through prajna wisdom (the realization and actualization of anatta and emptiness).

Here’s an excerpt from https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Cessation

“Cessation is of two kinds:

analytical (Skt. pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha; Tib. སོ་སོར་བརྟགས་པའི་འགོག་པ་, sosor takpé gokpa, Wyl. so sor brtags pa'i 'gog pa) and non-analytical (Skt. apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha; Tib. བརྟགས་མིན་འགོག་པ་, tak min gokpa, Wyl. brtags min 'gog pa).
In his commentary to Mipham Rinpoche’s Khenjuk, Khenpo Nüden writes:

Analytical cessation
This is the unconditioned aspect of the permanent elimination of destructive emotions and other factors to be eliminated, through the force of developing realization of the undefiling path, such as the wisdom of discernment, within the mind.

Non-analytical cessation
This does not refer to the ceasing of latent habitual tendencies as a result of analysis and investigation, but rather to the absence of a given thing in a particular place due to an incompleteness of necessary causes and conditions, as in the case of horns on a horse’s head, for instance. Another example which is mentioned in the commentaries is the fact that other types of consciousness do not arise when the eye-consciousness is distracted by a visual form. This also includes all the various forms of non-existence (or absence), such as the absence of a vase in a particular place.”

2) No cold and heat as cold and heat is subsumed into Pure Subjectivity

In systems such as Advaita Vedanta, the objectivity of all phenomena are deconstructed and subsumed into the Pure Subjectivity of pure consciousness. However, Pure Consciousness remains inherently existing and unchanging substratum and substance of everything, just like gold is the substance of necklace. In Advaita, “The world is illusory,

Brahman alone is real, Brahman is the world.” - Shankara. The world as a superimposition of name and form is an illusion, Brahman (pure consciousness) alone is real as its true source and substratum, and Brahman is finally revealed to be the only substance of reality/the world (the universe as Self is real). This is different from anatta as in 3). This process of deconstructing objectivity and finally the collapse of the Witness into one seamless awareness results in the realization of One Mind (see John Tan Stage 4).

3) No cold and heat as where cold and heat kills you and manifests its own radiance in anatta

As John Tan wrote in 2013 to Mr. J, “The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space, water... is the place where the earth, fire, wind, space and water kills “You” and fully shines as its own radiance, a complete taste of itself and fully itself.” This will only become an effortless state after realization of anatta (John Tan Stage 5). Also see the Glossary section for “The Place Where There Is No Cold or Heat”.

4) No cold and heat where cold and heat are thoroughly deconstructed by realizing its non-arising

There is no cold and heat as ‘cold’ and ‘heat’ are completely devoid of essence, empty of existing [inherently] by its own side. Cold and heat are mere names, empty of substantive essence. When searched for, no ‘cold’ or ‘heat’ could be found to exist by its own essence.

“Here, O Sariputra,
all dharmas are marked with emptiness ;
they are not produced or stopped, not defiled or immaculate, not deficient or complete.
Therefore, O Sariputra,
in emptiness there is no form nor feeling, nor perception, nor impulse, nor consciousness ;
No eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, mind ; No forms, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables or objects of mind ; No sight-organ element, and so forth, until we come to :
No mind-consciousness element ; There is no ignorance, no extinction of ignorance, and so forth, until we come to :
There is no decay and death, no extinction of decay and death. There is no suffering, no origination, no stopping, no path.
There is no cognition, no attainment and no non-attainment.”

- Heart Sutra https://www.dharmanet.org/HeartSutra.htm

"Myriad Objects
Preston Putzel
Vinnana anidassana would be Anatta equipoise I’m pretty sure.
Equivalent to seeing Dependent Arising in the reverse order (with the cessation of ignorance....etc)
Also the same as the cessation of contact/phassa nirodha.
Sekhas access it intermittently but deviate from it due to residual/habitual self-clinging.

Arahants would never deviate from it, as I understand.
· Reply
· 3h"
Myriad Objects
Yes.
Malcolm wrote:
The view is self-originated pristine consciousness, free from the extreme of the dualism of an apprehended object and an apprehending subject.
— Self-Liberated Vidyā Tantra
srivijaya wrote:
Brilliant quote.
Not unlike Viññanam anidassanam from the Kevatta sutta:
Consciousness without feature, without end, luminous all around
http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka ... .than.html
Malcolm wrote:
It has precisely the same meaning.
https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=40&t=23141...

Also, John Tan, 2014:
"It is also important that Buddha relates a description similar to consciousness without features in Bahiya sutta. This is what I told Mr. J about allowing the five elements to "kill you" when he asked me about how I understand consciousness without features."
"Consciousness without features. See how yor answer.
We must know that Buddha told the bhikkhu the way the question is phrased is invalid and must be understood not as a cessation of the 4 elements without remainder.
But I believe Stian is not seeing that way.
Therefore cessation/nirodha should be understood from the perspective of "no footing", the release without ground of the elements.
And a consciousness that is so is luminous without feature
Where the place without heat and cold
Not exactly no-mind but the featureless quality of groundlessness...that is you must understand the featureless quality in the experience."
"Just realized that kevatta consciousness without features is not the cessation of the 4 elements but the 4 elements having no footing.
Yes
Very often we say if there is no subject, how can there be object. This may sound logical but isn't verified as an experiential truth.
As we can see from the case of actualism and two fold emptiness. Why is this so?"

“Soh Wei Yu

Admin

Aditya Prasad Kenneth Bok
Yes, all internal subjective perceiver and agent and external reality are exhausted upon maturity of insights.
https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2020/10/exhaustion-of-all-phenomena.html
"[4:29 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: Appearances are not phenomena
[4:31 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: Exhaustion of phenomena means like the sense of observer being dissolved, the sense of object also dissapeared.
[4:38 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah..
[4:38 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Malcolm also said exhaustion of phenomena doesnt mean no more appearance
[4:39 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: Yes
[4:39 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: you should not have that sense by now also
[4:45 PM, 9/6/2020] John Tan: A few years post anatta, I do not have sense of objects and physicality....objects are deconstructed by contemplating DO and total exertion. Therefore there is no seer, no seeing and nothing seen.
I am now compiling the different nuance of total exertion in taoism, zen and yoga... 🤣
[5:05 PM, 9/6/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. yeah i dont have sense of solid phenomena"

This however does not mean there are no more appearances. In fact, all sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touch, sensations, thoughts are no longer experienced in terms of reified self and phenomena but as the display of pure wisdom. The entire environment becomes pure land, as I wrote in the preface of AtR guide. Or as the Vajrayana (and even Zen) teachers say, "All appearances are the mandala of the deities, all sounds are the mandala of mantra, and all thoughts are the mandala of enlightened mind. The nature of all apparent and existing things—of this entire world and all its beings—is the great mandala of the manifest ground, our basic state."

That being said, if one truly realizes I AM and deepens one's samadhi, it can be incredibly blissful, not depressing at all. For example Eckhart Tolle and Ramana Maharshi just sat in parks and caves in Nirvikalpa Samadhi all the time absorbed in the transcendent bliss of formless Beingness after their initial Self-Realization. It is however directed only to the Mind sense door, unlike after nondual anatta -- all six senses becomes pure and luminous, nondual perfection. Hence the practice at the I AM stage is still dissociative. The I AM phase is blissful but not liberating, in fact even up to non-dual it cannot be said to be liberating from Buddhadharma POV. It can lead to even greater grasping. The passion for consciousness, the identification involved (even towards an ultimate identity) is what hinders the experience of liberation. Anatta is the beginning of the experience of liberation and further refined with twofold emptiness.

After nondual and especially anatta, one's path is total openness and integration, non dissociative. One experiences Buddha-nature in all senses and manifestations and all actions are totally exerted and actualized.

However having pure vision of all appearances is post anatta and emptiness realization. One should know that while not operating in pure vision, all phenomena experienced is simply samsara and not a source of happiness at all. They are appearances misperceived into phenomena -- objects with characteristics, and (mis)appropriated in terms of I, me, and

mine, in terms of agent and action, perceiver and perceived, posessor and possessed. Whereas in truth all such conditioned phenomena are impermanent, unsatisfactory and non-self. If one seeks to find any happiness in terms of any conditioned and appropriated phenomena ('my cars', 'my billion dollars', 'my relationship', 'my ....'), one can never find any. Samsara is full of painful conditions, sickness, getting old, death, losing of loved ones and possessions, suffering happening all around in life, perhaps made more apparent by the pandemic recently, and especially if you live in poverty in a third world country. Be it a beggar or a billionaire, we are all equals in the face of death, which comes in a blink of an eye - with nothing we came and with nothing we shall depart. But not only are these painful conditions suffering: even pleasant experiences and phenomena are suffering, because according to Buddha they are the dukkha or suffering of impermanence. All conditioned phenomena, even pleasant ones, are ultimately transient and fleeting, subject to death, decay and cessation and of the nature of suffering. Your money, your youth, your beauty, your health, your relationships, your human life, very soon they will be all gone. All conditioned phenomena are fleeting and transient like a bubble, so how can they be any true source of happiness and refuge? The Diamond Sutra states, "A shooting star, a clouding of the sight, a lamp, An illusion, a drop of dew, a bubble, A dream, a lightning’s flash, a thunder cloud— This is the way one should see the conditioned." To think otherwise is to suffer from delusion, to falsely imagine that somehow finding the right things in samsara will finally offer us real fulfillment, which will ultimately only disappoint. It is a sign of true wisdom and maturity to finally realize that all conditioned phenomena are impermanent, suffering, non-self and are not fit for clinging. Samsara is only suffering.
· Reply · 31m · Edited
Soh Wei Yu
Admin

As someone posted before, "Garab Dorje Rinpoche said that, "Even with 5 Wisdoms, the Buddha was unable to find happiness in Samsara."

The Buddha himself said, ""Bhikkhus, all is burning. And what is the all that is burning?

"The eye is burning, forms are burning, eye-consciousness is burning, eye-contact is burning, also whatever is felt as pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant that arises with eye-contact for its indispensable condition, that too is burning. Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusion. I say it is burning with birth, aging and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs."

Nirvana is the sole happiness and bliss, which the scriptures explain is not a feeling of perpetually blissful sensation, but merely the cessation or absence of suffering. But this is not implying that liberation is a state of dissociation which I shall explain further.

In a sense perhaps Buddhism sounds even more 'depressing' (although it really isn't -- only perhaps to those inclined towards theistic doctrine) than ACIM because it goes further than saying God doesn't create the world or even know about it, it questions the existence of God itself. Buddha didn't believe in a God or creator and in fact repudiates such an idea, and neither do I believe in a creator, so you can say that I am atheist (I've heard Kyle Dixon and Acharya Malcolm

state the same). Buddhists simply have a totally distinct paradigm, one that doesn't need a God (and so do some other Indian teachings like Samkhya and Jainism, although Buddhism also differs from their view in many other areas). The question of suffering (why would a benevolent God create suffering?) -- a question that the Buddha similarly raised to repudiate the whole notion of a creator God -- simply does not apply to Buddhadharma at all since we in fact, being atheists, reject a creator God and assert that the suffering of sentient beings dependently originates based on ignorance, afflictions and karma without any real agent/agency (whether external or internal). This is however not a hopeless situation because nirvana is the end of that suffering and there is a path to end that suffering. And if you go further into the teachings of dependent origination and emptiness, then the very notion of a world as existing or non-existing vanishes. All phenomena are fundamentally empty and non-arisen and non-originating.

(Staying near Sāvatthī ... Then Ven. Kaccāna Gotta approached the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down, sat to one side. As he was sitting there he said to the Blessed One: “Lord, ‘Right view, right view,’ it is said. To what extent is there right view?”

“By & large, Kaccāna, this world1 is supported by [takes as its object] a polarity, that of existence & non-existence. But when one sees the origination2 of the world as it has come to be with right discernment, ‘non-existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one. When one sees the cessation of the world as it has come to be with right discernment, ‘existence’ with reference to the world does not occur to one.3)
The view of Buddhadharma is nondual, free of subject and object, existence or non-existence. Heart Sutra said, "Form is emptiness, emptiness is form." Nagarjuna said: "25:20: nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ koṭiḥ

The limit of nirvana is also the limit [of samsara]
na tayor antaraṁ kiñcit susūkśmam api vidyate |
there’s not the slightest detail at all found between them."

Nirvana is samsara rightly seen, which is not to say that samsara and nirvana are indistinguishable. As Kyle Dixon said, "This pointer simply means don’t look for liberation elsewhere, but samsara is not literally nirvana. The latter is a complete knowledge of the former."

If all conditioned phenomena are suffering, how can a Buddha be free of suffering while alive? The answer is simple - by apperceiving the true nature of all phenomena to be empty and non-arisen, a Buddha ceases to perceive conditioned phenomena. A Buddha ceases to appropriate phenomena in terms of I, me, and mine, and also ceases to reify phenomena in terms of characteristics. A Buddha ceases all tendencies towards craving, anger, delusion.

The Buddha said in Kalaka Sutta, "Thus, monks, the Tathāgata, when seeing what is to be seen, doesn’t suppose an (object as) seen. He doesn’t suppose an unseen. He doesn’t suppose an (object) to-be-seen. He doesn’t suppose a seer..." - https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/AN/AN4_24.html

"That saṁsāra is nirvāṇa is a major tenet of Mahāyāna philosophy. "Nothing of saṁsāra is different from nirvāṇa,

nothing of nirvāṇa is different from saṁsāra. That which is the limit of nirvāṇa is also the limit of saṁsāra; there is not the slightest difference between the two." [1] And yet there must be some difference between them, for otherwise no distinction would have been made and there would be no need for two words to describe the same state. So Nāgārjuna also distinguishes them: "That which, taken as causal or dependent, is the process of being born and passing on, is, taken noncausally and beyond all dependence, declared to be nirvāṇa." [2] There is only one reality -- this world, right here -- but this world may be experienced in two different ways. Saṁsāra is the "relative" world as usually experienced, in which "I" dualistically perceive "it" as a collection of objects which interact causally in space and time. Nirvāṇa is the world as it is in itself, nondualistic in that it incorporates both subject and object into a whole which, Mādhyamika insists, cannot be characterized (Chandrakīrti: "Nirvāṇa or Reality is that which is absolved of all thought-construction"), but which Yogācāra nevertheless sometimes calls "Mind" or "Buddhanature," and so forth." – Zen teacher David Loy, https://web.archive.org/web/20180327153119/http://ccbs.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-PHIL/david.htm

As Kyle Dixon wrote,

"To “exist” involves certain criteria that are undesirable in the sense that existent phenomena are conditioned by nature, and thus arise and cease.

Buddhas have fully integrated with a complete, non-conceptual experiential knowledge of the nature of apparently conditioned phenomena, thus for a Buddha, conditioned phenomena no longer appear, because they were rooted in delusion. Buddhas are completely free of delusion.

Therefore to address your question, since Buddhas do not conceive of or perceive conditioned phenomena, they do not conceive or perceive of existence in appearances.

This does not mean they are inert and unconscious, they are indeed conscious and awake, but they see appearances like a dream. We would not say the tiger who attacks you in a dream actually “exists.” The tiger does appear, but it is not a substantial entity. The same goes for all phenomena of even our waking, consensus reality. A Buddha sees all phenomena like a dream, and does not see phenomena as substantial entities that “exist.”

A Buddha himself or herself also cannot be said to “exist” for this same reason, but they appear nevertheless."

AN 4:24 Kāḷaka Sutta | At Kāḷaka’s Park
DHAMMATALKS.ORG

· Reply · Remove Preview · 30m · Edited” – Soh, 2021
https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/posts/5752308824810500/

“In the actual natural state objects no longer appear to be external. Objects don’t appear at all, just non-arisen appearance which is experientially ascertained to be the display of your own vidyā. Sems and sems byung are both arrested and the luminosity of your nature, zangtal, becomes the prevailing modality of consciousness.

That state is massively different in expression when compared to our relative condition.

It just seems to me that you are asserting that our relative condition, with functioning mind [sems] and mental factors [sems byung] which perceive objects is the natural state, but it is not the natural state, it is avidyā.

Thus, when a beginners trekchö practice is referred to as being in the “natural state” it is just a nominal natural state, not the actual awakened natural state.” – Kyle Dixon, 2021

Wrong Understanding of Emptiness as Nihilism (Everything Doesn’t Exist):

In response to someone, Soh explained that emptiness does not mean non-existence of phenomena/suffering, “Denying suffering and asserting that there is no end to suffering is nihilism. If you realize emptiness, you also see dependent arising and the four noble truths. Then you realize that four noble truths is the right view, that there is suffering, cause of suffering, the end of suffering and the path to end suffering, but all these are seen via dependent origination and not via the false view of essence, self, or agency. Meaning, you do not see suffering as existing in and of itself independent of the conditions that give rise to suffering. Nor do you think suffering arise merely via the agency of a Self or controller. Although suffering appears, it is both empty/non-arisen and dependently originating, and without self/Self/agent. Then, you discern clearly the causes and conditions for the arising of suffering and also the remedy. If you interpret emptiness in terms of nihilism and non-existence, then the antidote has turned into a poison and there is no cure.”

"There never was a self. One must re-orientate oneself that it is functionality and action that give rise to [the sense of a] self/entity rather than [a real] agent giving rise to action. Therefore from anatta, we see Dependent Origination, cause and conditions, action, karma... unlike [the misunderstanding of] no-self therefore no dependent origination and causality. The former is non-substantialist view, the later is using substantialist self view to understand anatta (no-self)." - John Tan, 2015

"Seeing afflictive Dependent Origination is enlightened view because one sees Dependent Origination. There is no [insight into] afflictive Dependent Origination for sentient beings, there is [the conceiving of a] Self/self... they do not see Dependent Origination." - John Tan, 2014

“Non-arising [anutpāda] is a synonym for emptiness [śūnyatā] and is the heart of Madhyamaka.

Nihilism [ucceda] is the negation of convention, the negation of appearance, or the reification of non-existence [abhāva].

Non-arising is not equivalent to any of those positions.

In his Madhyamakālaṃkāra, Śantarakṣita states:

"Therefore, the tathāgatas have said

‘All phenomena do not arise’ because this conforms with the ultimate. This ‘ultimate.’ in reality, is free from all proliferation. Because there is no arising and so on, nonarising and so on isn't possible, because its entity has been negated."

- Kyle Dixon

“In the passages above, the Abhidharma opponent is saying that if Nagarjuna is right about "emptiness," then the very practices that make Buddhism soteriologically efficacious will be destroyed. That is, if it is true that the Four Noble Truths are "empty," then there is no such thing as the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, no such thing as impermanence, "non-self," and nirvana, and the practices that supposedly lead to liberation will be destroyed. Nagarjuna responds to the opponent by saying that he has misunderstood "emptiness":

We say that this understanding of yours
Of emptiness and purpose of emptiness
And of the significance of emptiness is incorrect.
As a consequence you are harmed by it.
(Garfield 1995, p.68)

Because the opponent has taken "emptiness" to signify the nonexistence of the Four Noble Truths, he is "harmed by it"- in other words, he sees "emptiness" as destructive. But his reason for thinking of "emptiness" in this way is that he thinks that a "correct" meditation on causality, the aggregates, and the Four Noble Truths is necessary for liberation.

Nagarjuna responds to this assumption by reversing the tables and saying, in effect, that it is not "emptiness" that destroys practice, but the very idea that such things as causality, the aggregates, and the Four Noble Truths are "inherent," essential, or necessary:

If you perceive the existence of all things
In terms of svabhava,
Then this perception of all things
Will be without the perception of causes and conditions.

Effects and causes
And agent and action
And conditions and arising and ceasing
And effects will be rendered impossible.
(Garfield 1995, p.69)

P.572

Nagarjuna goes on to say that the reason essences militate against causal conditions, arising, ceasing, agency, and so forth is that the idea of essence entails independence, and if things are by nature independent then it is impossible for them to interact causally. If this is true then there is no "dependent arising," and without "dependent arising" it is impossible to make sense of the ability to cultivate a virtuous life. In other words, without the process of change the whole idea of cultivating the "fruits" of a Buddhist life is rendered nonsensical. Nagarjuna responds by saying that Buddhist praxis must be "empty" if we are to make any sense of the Four Noble Truths:

If dependent arising is denied,
Emptiness itself is rejected.
This would contradict
All of the worldly conventions.

If emptiness is rejected,
No action will be appropriate.
There would be action which did not begin,
And there would be agent without action.

If there is svabhava, the whole world
Will be unarising, unceasing,
And static. The entire phenomenal world
Would be immutable.

If it (the world) were not empty,
Then action would be without profit.
The act of ending suffering and
Abandoning misery and defilement would not exist.
(Garfield 1995, p.72)” - How Experiential Realization Helps in Liberation

Chandrakirti:

"If you regard things as existent by virtue of (a reified) intrinsic reality, you thereby regard them as bereft of causes and conditions. And thereby you are condemning effects, causes, agents, actions, activities, originations, cessations, and even fruitional goals. Whatever is relativity we proclaim that emptiness. Nothing whatsoever is found which is not relativistically originated. Therefore, nothing whatsoever is found which is not empty. So if all things were *not* empty, there would be no origination and no destruction.”

“EMPTINESS DEVIATING TO THE BASIC NATURE
Timeless Deviation to the Nature of Knowables The meditation of inseparable phenomena and emptiness is called “emptiness endowed with the supreme aspect.” Not knowing how emptiness and interdependence abide in

nonduality, you decide that emptiness is a nothingness that has never existed and that is not influenced at all by qualities or defects. Then you underestimate the cause and effect of virtue and vice, or else lapse exclusively into the nature of all things being originally pure, primordially free, and so forth. Bearing such emptiness, the relative level of interdependence is not mastered. In this respect, this is what is known as mahamudra: one's basic nature is unoriginated and, since it is neither existent nor nonexistent, eternal nor nil, true nor false, nor any other such aspects, it has no existence whatsoever. Nonetheless, its unceasing radiance arises as the relative level of all kinds of interdependence, so it is known as emptiness having the core of interdependence and interdependence having the nature of emptiness. Therefore, emptiness does not stray to the nature of knowables. In the Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way it is said: *Anything that doesn't arise dependently Is a phenomenon that has no existence. Therefore anything that is not empty Is a phenomenon that has no existence.* And as said in the Commentary on Bodhichitta: *It is taught that the relative plane is emptiness, And emptiness alone is the relative plane.*" – The Royal Seal of Mahamudra, Volume 2, Khamtrul Rinpoche

"level 7

krodha

· 6h

"We can't say there's non-existence because there's still cognizance (wisdom)... but this cognizance has no substantial existence or basis, it's empty"

[Krodha/Kyle Dixon:] That lack of substantial existence actually lends to the Dzogchen teachings and luminaries often referring to such things as *med par gsal snang* "clearly apparent non-existent" or "non-existent clear appearance."

Thus don't be timid to say these things are ultimately non-existent, the fact that we acknowledge that they appear means we avoid nihilism.

For example, Longchenpa in the *chos dbyings mdzod* auto-commentary:

Though there is nothing established as internal or external, the reflected appearances are understood through the eight examples of illusion. Though designated as dharmatā, dharmin, and so on, a great, clear appearance that does not exist is asserted in this tradition of the Great Perfection.

5

STAGE 7: Presence is Spontaneously Perfected

Non-dual luminosity, anatta, empty nature, are spontaneously manifesting, self-arising and emerging naturally and every actualized sight, sound, form, experience blossoms into lotus (wisdom) on its own without dualistic effort.

"After cycles and cycles of refining our practice and insights, we will come to this realization:

Anatta is a seal, not a stage.
Awareness has always been non-dual.
Appearances have always been Non-arising.
All phenomena are 'interconnected' and by nature Maha.
All are always and already so.

Only dualistic and inherent views are obscuring these experiential facts and therefore what is really needed is simply to experience whatever arises openly and unreservedly (See section "On Spontaneous Perfection"). However this does not denote the end of practice; practice simply moves to become dynamic and conditions-manifestation based. The ground and the path of practice become indistinguishable." - John Tan, 2009

"Spontaneous perfection to me refers to the 3 tastes of my practice *(Soh: Anatta, +A and -A)* that I mentioned are spontaneously perfected. It is just effortless and ongoing expression from there on. Practice just take another form as I stated in the article - practice-enlightenment." - John Tan, 2013

"If we want to fully realize the inexpressible, be willing to give up all centers and point of references that manifests in the form of 'who', 'when' and 'where'. Just give up the entire sense of self then instantly all things are spontaneously perfected." - John Tan, 2009

"John TanMonday, February 10, 2014 at 1:45pm UTC+08

Longchenpa is not talking about no realization. He is talking about realization is not the cause of liberation. For phenomena has always been in the state of nirvana, how can realization cause freedom. But many will take it that no realization is needed. But for one that realizes 2 folds [twofold emptiness], this view that realization is needed or realization causes freedom must be abandoned. For it hinders natural perfection. That is why after 2 folds, this view of perfection is important. So one must turn the view into natural perfection after 2 folds."

"John TanFriday, December 26, 2014 at 12:24pm UTC+08
we can talk and talk and talk...but without seeing essencelessness from top to bottom, left to right...the unconditioned release and the spontaneous perfection will not dawn as actual taste....it is not necessary to do analysis like in the mmk but it does help a lot especially in this modern age where the mind is so sophisticated...lol....it is the recognition of the "essencelessness" that is most crucial, once we clearly see by way of analysis or by way of direct insight of the relationships between essencelessness, freedom, grasping, natural manifestation and spontaneity....and continue to authenticate the truth in activities... when non-dual essencelessness as it is dawn...everything and every action will be free, perfect and unmade."

"John TanFriday, January 2, 2015 at 11:21am UTC+08

After certain phase, a practitioner must turn the view towards natural perfection but people don't like to hear that. Why after certain phase? Why create levels towards liberation? Since wisdom is perfect from beginning, why are we doing this and that, isn't that promoting and prolonging conditioning unnecessarily? It sounds logical therefore all the more it should be pointed out correctly. There is a way towards the natural state which may sound counter-intuitive... how can there be a way towards naturalness...lol. Btw I am not talking about Dzogchen but I am simply talking about the nature of our experience."

"John TanFriday, January 9, 2015 at 11:25pm UTC+08

When you say this way, you are unable to bring out the taste of appearance is clarity itself and it is tasting this absence of clarity/appearance without it disappearing. If it is realized that though manifestation appears, it never was truly there so even "disappearance" too is illusion.

Therefore I like "mere designation" so much because it completely brings out this taste.

But all these are just -A. Next is to look at +A. It is exactly the same again but this round non-conceptual appearance and dependent arising is brought to be seen and understood at the conventional level.

So it is understanding the nature of experience... not just directly experiencing awareness.

After this practice is no practice... just complete non-dual releasing... natural and spontaneous. When essencelessness is thoroughly seen through, the way of practice can only be spontaneous presence and natural perfection. Essence/inherent is what that prevents one from being natural and spontaneous. But don't link with Dzogchen... all these do not need Dzogchen... just thoroughness of knowing the habit and many faces of inherent tendencies."

[2:25 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Malcolm said dependent origination is natural perfection.. just that from like ultimate (forgot the term he used) its like all causes and conditions are empty and there is no distinction of cause and effect.. but its not contradictory. Like the madhyamika refutation of the 4 (diamond slivers) and the six something.. Lhun grub means not made by anyone, everything happens naturally. Dependent origination is not made by anyone and happens naturally

[2:25 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Malcolm said kyle is the first person to get his view completely

[2:26 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Also he invited me to join his santa fe dzogchen teaching next year, kyle will be joining

[2:27 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Kyle asked many qns about rigpa and dzogchen practice.. his main practice now is something like dorje drollo a teaching transmitted by malcolm

[2:29 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Btw kyle said his anatta insight happened in two phases

[2:30 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: The first one which was very intense and he cried and felt death, no seer no hearer etc and he said something like his thought dunno what sinked below.. and he saw time is an illusion etc and you said thats the most intense anatta you have seen

[2:30 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Then years later he had another insight which is zero dimensional no distance etc

[2:30 PM, 9/12/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Then i mentioned is it related to your two stanzas of anatta he said yes

[3:03 PM, 9/12/2019] John Tan: 👍

[3:04 PM, 9/12/2019] John Tan: Yes I think you should attend Malcolm dzogchen teaching next year. (Soh's comments: both John and I did attend Malcolm's Dzogchen teachings online in 2020 which was great, if you're interested check out www.zangthal.com)

[9:10 AM, 9/24/2019] John Tan: But like what Malcolm said, DO is natural perfection.

[9:10 AM, 9/24/2019] John Tan: One just have to realize this.

[24/9/19, 9:11:40 AM] John Tan: Then the mind will rest upon nothing, not even the One Mind. Whatever appears, though a mere reflection, is entire and spontaneously perfect.

[24/9/19, 9:12:21 AM] John Tan: One does not need to sink back to anything else.

[24/9/19, 9:14:05 AM] John Tan: I think geo is clear about this from what he wrote to me. ...however still have have deconstructed "physicality". That is the idea of "physicality" has not been sufficiently deconstructed to become just mere empty sensations dancing in zero dimension.

[24/9/19, 9:15:02 AM] John Tan: If the "physicality" is there, one will be disturbed by the "idea" of interaction and locality.

http://dharmaconnectiongroup.blogspot.com/.../ground-path..."

"André A. Pais
.
A lil reflection:
Reality is naturally untainted by the three spheres of subject, object and action. As Maitreya said:
"Any thought of 'subject', 'object' and 'action'
Is held to be a cognitive obscuration."
There is no knower, known or knowing; no seer, seen or seeing; no perceiver, perceived or perception.

There is no knowing, seeing or perception, and yet appearances spontaneously radiate with a light of their own. This vivid clarity is the mind's nature arising as dependent origination. So, don't look inside seeking the nature of awareness - it is the moon itself, rising from behind the clouds.
It's like this that Dōgen is able to drop body and mind, and become actualized by the myriad things. Free from knower, known and knowing itself, there is no trace of awakening - for there is no sentient being to become awakened, nor insentient rock to remain asleep. And yet, this no-trace unfolds endlessly, for it is the nature of the natural state that its radiance spontaneously manifests.

[1:42 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: 👍
[1:44 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: Actually I thought Andre should already have such insight and experience last year
[6:29 AM, 3/13/2021] John Tan: I would say:

If there is no knowing, seeing or perception and yet appearances spontaneously radiates, then it should not be dependent origination, should be spontaneous presence.

If there is name and form (namarupa), there is consciousness then there is dependent origination.

Comments
André A. Pais
John Tan
I wonder exactly what the difference is between DO and spontaneous presence. In a way, DO seems more intellectual, inferential and more into the aproximate ultimate (emptiness as negation). That's been part of my difficulty with the term "total exertion" - it seems to invite a conceptualization of a whole web of causality that arises as "this moment."
On the other hand, lately DO (and by extension total exertion) is taking the shape of "vivid radiance," or "spontaneous clarity." DO means that there is clarity (origination), but it is spontaneous (dependent and thus empty - initially as negation, but finally as non-referentiality, beyond notions and "pure").
I've been trying to connect the dots between "nature of mind" - which feels rather sujective and "in here" - and the whole Madhyamaka enterprise of emptiness and DO - which feels rather objective and "out there." When investigating the nature of mind, one usually tries to look within, kind of turning the attention backwards; when investigating DO, one may knock on a table, drop a pen, etc., checking the inexorable "law of causality" - when this is, that is.
But what's coming up to me is that the "nature of mind" - as inseparable clarity and emptiness/unobstructedness - is nothing but the dependently arisen nature of experience/appearances. From the openness and referencelessness of mind, vivid appearances "naturally" manifest - and this is nothing but DO ("naturally" paradoxically means "when conditions are present").
Madhyamaka, when stressing the union of the two truths as inseparable union of appearance and emptiness, seems to be opening the same door that Mahamudra and Dzogchen seem to be opening with the nature of mind as inseparable emptiness, clarity and responsiveness/ expression/ compassion.

This is what I was trying to convey in a recent post in AtR:
The two truths meet everywhere.
.
- Dependent origination refutes
both extreme views of is and is-not.
- Appearance and emptiness are united
as the scent that is experience.
- Clarity and limitlessness are inseparable
as the nature of mind.
.
Mind as clarity is nothing
but experience as appearingness.
Experience as emptiness is nothing
but limitlessness as mind.
.
Clarity-appearance is nothing but origination.
Empty-limitlessness is nothing but dependency.
The diving into the nature of mind is nothing
but the embracing of dependent origination.
.
A feather slowly floats its way towards the ground;
The breeze makes the trees sway;
A sound suddenly pierces the silence;
That itself is the nature of mind.
.
The very pulsing of dependent origination
is the primordial face of the Tathāgata.
Like blood and veins and heart
- the two truths meet everywhere.

.

Reply

· 2h

André A. Pais

Stian Gudmundsen Høiland

.

Reply

· 2h

John Tan

André A. Pais

To me when spontaneous presence is expressed conventionally, it is expressed as dependent origination and emptiness. I m glad that you have understood total exertion this way. In seeing for examples, it is not only the eyes that sees, the ears, the hairs, the entire body-mind-enviroment are fully exerted and participating into the act of seeing. How is this possible if eyes, ears, nose, environment...everything are truly established and not merely conventional? If their conventionalities are not seen through, going beyond their designated boundaries into just the "seen" as the "lurid scenery" will just be another experience, not an insight.

Although integration of two truth is crucial, I think the difference must still be made on spontaneous presence from freedom of conceptual notions and DO and emptiness before integration. At least until certain experiential insights arise:

One is the supreme purity that relinquishes both pure and impurity, freedom from both notions. Without going through this process, it is difficult to "see" how notions create "things" and "existence".

When we affirm "internality", we are in fact affirming "externality" at the same time. This is what the mind can't see easily. Surely the mind thinks " 'internal and private and in here' are still undeniably true even without designated conceptual constructs". This undeniable conviction of "in here" is real and "undeniably exist" WITHOUT conceptual constructs is the "inherentness" that must be deconstructed. For without "externality", how does the sense of "internality" arise? If they are dependent, how could they exist truly? This is clearly elucidated in Mipham commentary on Shantarakahita's Madhyamakalankara, 71a and 72b:

71a

Production and the rest have no reality,

Thus non-production and the rest are equally impossible.

72b

Even "non-production," entertained conceptually,

Is relative and is not ultimate.

When how conceptual notions create confusions aren't clear, distinguishing mere appearances from added imputation on mere appearance will not be easy for the mind. Like why is the plant growing instead of decaying? At which point exactly is it growing or decaying? Same applies to cause and effect. Similar to analogy of the plant that grows and decays, the designated (Soh: designating?) consciousness determines that a cause has ceased and effect has come into "existence".

This emphasis of the thorough understanding of conceptual notions to be negated instead of creating "inherent existence" on top of the conventional is why Mipham said Tsongkhapa emptiness is notional emptiness. We do not empty the "inherent existence" of the vase, the entire conventional notion of "vase" is the "inherent existence" to be emptied, there is no "extra" inherent existence of something to be emptied. You can't retain the conventionality of vase and talk about emptiness. So essentially it is freeing entirely from conceptual thoughts; however unlike mere suppression of thoughts or non-analytical cessation, the uprooting is deep, thorough and imbued with prajna.

But does freedom from conceptualities deny vivid appearances, deny regularities? No -- that is why it is dependent origination and emptiness. However after going through the process and back relooking at conventionalities, we do

not see inherentness, agencies initiating actions, existence and non-existence and separations in the vivid non-dual display of causal functioning.
Next is the freedom from all notions will lead one into another taste -- unmade, unconditioned, natural spontaneity in contrast to artificially man-made mind constructs.
Once natural clarity, supreme purity, unconditioned natural spontaneity are realized via seeing through conventionalities, then I think integrating the two truth will be more fruitful.

7

- **Like**
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John Tan

André A. Pais

is poem "the two truths meet everywhere" from u?

Although the "meeting" everywhere is beautiful,

don't forgot the "in between" process and that includes:-

the formation, the deconstruction and the freedom from all notions.

The two truths meet everywhere.

.

- Dependent origination refutes

both extreme views of is and is-not.

- Appearance and emptiness are united

as the scent that is experience.

- Clarity and limitlessness are inseparable

as the nature of mind.

.

Mind as clarity is nothing

but experience as appearingness.

Experience as emptiness is nothing

but limitlessness as mind.

.

Clarity-appearance is nothing but origination.

Empty-limitlessness is nothing but dependency.

The diving into the nature of mind is nothing

but the embracing of dependent origination.

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A feather slowly floats its way towards the ground;

The breeze makes the trees sway;

A sound suddenly pierces the silence;

That itself is the nature of mind.

.

The very pulsing of dependent origination

is the primordial face of the Tathāgata.

Like blood and veins and heart

- the two truths meet everywhere.

- **Like**
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Connecting dots, authenticating DO

The two truths meet everywhere.

- **Dependent origination refutes**

Both extreme views of is and is-not.

- **Appearance and emptiness are united**

As the scent that is experience.

- **Clarity and limitlessness are inseparable**

As the nature of mind.

.

Mind as clarity is nothing

But experience as appearingness.

Experience as emptiness is nothing

But limitlessness as mind.

.

Clarity-appearance is nothing but origination.

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.

The very pulsing of dependent origination

Is the primordial face of the Tathāgata.

Like blood and veins and heart

- **The two truths meet everywhere.**

Soh, I think you should do a summary of your understanding on the recent post by Andre. The poem of expressing the meeting of two truth by realising dependent arising is beautiful. Like a sudden flash of insight that pierce through a koan, it clears the fog of dependent origination by directly leaping over all artificial definitions right into the heart, blood and veins of Tathāgata. So what exactly is realized but was not recognized in the past? Put some effort into articulating this point clearly.

Appearance and emptiness are united

As the scent that is experience.

...

A feather slowly floats its way towards the ground;

The breeze makes the trees sway;

A sound suddenly pierces the silence;

That itself is the nature of mind.

Imo that concisely expressed the heart to heart authentication of dependent origination as clarity natural radiance (arising).

That said, despite the non-conceptual heart to heart authentication, still the "in-between" de-construction process are extremely invaluable activities that cannot be bypassed and overlooked. In fact, the missing key in sharpening and maturing one's prajna lies precisely in these in-between process of connecting dots. For mature and smooth integration of view, insights and experiences post anatta, we should not be simply skewed towards dwelling and deepening into non-conceptual taste of suchness. So don't end up like Héshang Móhēyǎn (和尚摩訶衍) in his debate with Kamalasila in Lhasa although in the Chinese sources, many claimed otherwise but that is beside the point.

Andre posted another good article today about how the 8 worldly concerns in daily engagements relate to agentless-action, dependent origination and emptiness and all these play their inevitable bits in wearing off our obscurations. Habitual obscurations are exceedingly subtle like scent left behind a container hence there is no short-cut to liberation -- it's all step by step and bit by bit erosion of the nuances and subtleness of "inherentness" in one's ignorance.

Edited

"Kyle Dixon replied:

"Though the kun byed rgyal po is an exposition given from the perspective of one's nature. As it is a sems sde teaching that focuses on "byang chub sems" [skt. bodhicitta] which is the sems sde name for the basis i.e., the nature of mind.

So from the point of view of the nature of mind there is nothing to accept or reject, nothing to improve, no basis, no path, no result. But a Dzogchen practitioner is not the nature of mind. A Dzogchenpa only works with his/her knowledge [rig pa] of the nature of mind. And aspirants initially have no knowledge of that nature to speak of. And then adepts on the path have an incomplete knowledge that is refined through familiarization and practice. Finally at the time of the result that knowledge is complete. But the practitioner has much to do, extensive meditation, extensive practice. Our nature is perfect, but we as practitioners are not.

Not understanding these contexts properly creates big issues for people."

"In whatever case, whenever we are thrown out of non-dual, it is always due to the immaturity of insight of our non-dual and empty nature. To consciousness, it is always insights that liberates. Spontaneous perfection is not about the path we adopt, it is that ultimate and thorough insight that allows us to willingly, fearlessly and unreservedly open to whatever that arises; for whatever arises is always [in its nature] to liberate itself when experienced as non-dual and empty awareness." - John Tan, 2009

"Knowing mind (clarity) is not knowing the nature of mind and the nature of mind is not for knowing nor can it be known, learned or studied, that is why it is purging of all views. It can however be expressed as a negation of all inherent-ness. Free from all substantialities and extremes, there is just unconditioned expression in natural spontaneity. Like the previous texts you posted about the "one life". I think I have discussed this with you before in our early conversations.

We must differentiate and discern experience free from a background and source. What happened when the background is gone? There is the non-doership aspect and the luminous clarity aspect. Ascribing all as life is an extrapolation as I told you before. There is no need to create an alternate source call "one life". The experience as being lived by and expression of life is just an experience of non-doership due to freedom from background source. However one must still be able to discern correct what is unconditioned expression and what is karmic habituation." - John Tan, 2019

"[5:27 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Was meditating outside
[5:28 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Then I reached a state where mind body was dropped and tranquilized and numb.. then suddenly i entered a blissful state and suddenly it became very clearly apparent that the union of appearance and dependent arising is spontaneous presence.. the whole universe is spontaneously presencing and wonderful without a trace of self.. no effort or practice is required just complete dying to spontaneous presencing
[5:29 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Union of empty appearance and dependent arising*
[5:30 PM, 12/30/2019] John Tan: Very good
[5:33 PM, 12/30/2019] John Tan: The term "dependent arising" understood from direct experience as the manifestation of appearances. You don't have to think of the logic... MMK [Mulamadhyamikakarika] is simply negating the inherent way of understanding appearances. Obviously there are appearances, so what is this "arising without essence" called?
[5:34 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Spontaneous presence
[5:34 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Like tao
[5:34 PM, 12/30/2019] John Tan: The way of it
[5:34 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Dependent arising
[5:36 PM, 12/30/2019] John Tan: This arising, this merely occuring is neither caused nor uncaused. That is why it is called DO. In actual taste it is the natural and primordial state that spontaneously arise. You must have enough rest and sleep...then experience will blissful, clear and natural.
[5:38 PM, 12/30/2019] John Tan: You must
[5:39 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5:43 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Now my pce state is suddenly very strong but with the aspect of spontaneous presence clearer
[5:47 PM, 12/30/2019] John Tan: When pce becomes solidly clear, strong with inherent view like AF, it cannot be spontaneous. It must be light and free. Without background, foreground or dimension.
[5:49 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. ya i dont have sense of solid inherent foreground
[5:53 PM, 12/30/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Hmm i see.. the solid inherent view prevents seeing union of dependent arising and emptiness as spontaneous presence."

"Spontaneous presence is a good way of describing the state of equipoise. It is not a resting point or anything in particular because resting points are not spontaneous, nor is it some kind of affirmative negation because no inherent entities are affirmed.

This is not spoken in Madhyamika, but I think Dzogchen and Mahamudra speaks of it.

Arcaya Malcolm pointed out in December last year that Lhundrup (spontaneous presence) is the hidden meaning of prajnaparamita.

Also:

“Trekcho is to simply acknowledge that one's innate essence is empty. Togal is to recognize that the natural display is spontaneously present. They are not our creation; they are not produced by practice. There is no imagining of anything in either Trekcho or Togal.”

“To accomplish a deity, you must know the nature of the deity you are trying to accomplish. This is called 'identifying the deity to be accomplished'. The names, colors and attributes may differ, but a deity is actually the unity of primordial purity and spontaneous pres- ence. In this way, development and completion are also contained within Trekcho and Togal.”

- Vajra Speech

John Tan told me on October last year

“Actually there are two words that can fully expressed when conceptual constructs are seen through. If you can tell me, that will be good. Rest to me is nonsense...lol

Always non-conceptual here and there... headache. Better to keep quiet and continue your practice, less engagement in all these.”

Later I discovered that the two words are precisely spontaneous presence which John confirmed. I also showed John those passages above which he liked.”

"Has awareness stood out? There is no concentration needed. When six entries and exits are pure and primordial, the unconditioned stands shining, relaxed and uncontrived, luminous yet empty. The purpose of going through the 7 phases of perception shift is for this... Whatever arises is free and uncontrived, that is the supreme path. Whatever arises has never left their nirvanic state... ... your current mode of practice [after those experiential insights] should be as direct and uncontrived as possible. When you see nothing behind and magical appearances are too empty, awareness is naturally lucid and free. Views and all elaborations dissolved, mind-body forgotten... just unobstructed awareness. Awareness natural and uncontrived is supreme goal. Relax and do nothing, Open and boundless, Spontaneous and free, Whatever arises is fine and liberated, This is the supreme path. Top/bottom, inside/outside, Always without center and empty (2-fold emptiness), Then view is fully actualized and all experiences are great liberation." - John Tan, 2012

“There's absolutely no need to attempt to bring anything whatsoever, presence, witnessing, whatever, into sleep or any states (waking, dreaming, and deep sleep). Any dualistic effort is a form of doing. Bringing in a watcher is karma. All

dharmas, all phenomena, are fundamentally quiescent as nirvana, fundamentally non-arising and naturally manifesting as one's own state of radiance. Therefore true practice is resting in the natural, spontaneous perfection of luminosity and emptiness. Practice becomes dynamic rather than technique-bound as the spontaneous unfolding or self-arising of all displays, activities, sounds, colors, sensations, gets auto-actualized as the wisdom of luminous-emptiness. Everything arises as the state of meditation, which is non-meditation. Yet this requires anatta and emptiness insight as prerequisite." - Soh, 2018

In the words of Ch'an Master Hsiang-yen: "At one stroke I forgot all my knowledge! There's no use for artificial discipline, For, move as I will, I manifest the ancient Way.9 i

The Way of Zen (p. 145). Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Kindle Edition."

(Related: Satsang Nathan Videos where Nathan also quoted Ch'an Master Hsiang-yen and Bahiya Sutta)

"[11:53 PM, 12/8/2019] John Tan: It [referring to the words of Ch'an Master Hsiang-yen] is referring to natural state. But that is very high attainment...lol. easy to say, need aeons of life of 修为 [cultivation]。 Natural state is non-practice. Means 起心动念 [arising of thoughts] is naturally free and spontaneously perfected. Every moment is practice, whole-body mind is naturally mindful and aware. However 99.9% of us are not there... lol" - John Tan, 2019

John Tan advised me to study Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching. (However, not many good English translations are available, though he commented before that John Chalmers' and Richard Wilhelm's translations are quite good)

"It is important to note here that spontaneous perfection is the result of deeply penetrating into the non-dual luminosity, anatta, and empty/non-arising nature of mind/phenomena as always already so, by nature so, spontaneously perfected. If one thinks that one can skip Phases 1 to 6 and enter straight into 7, they are almost certainly, 99.999% of the case deluded, are stuck in the lower stages thinking those are final, missing some crucial elements of insight (how many countless people I've seen that are stuck at I AM or One Mind thinking that is spontaneous perfection!), or have the calibre of very rare types of saints and sages that belong to the realm of legends and fairy tales." - Soh, 2019

"Spontaneous perfection is not about negating dependent origination. In fact dependent origination and emptiness must be realised.

If there is the slightest sense that there is an experiencer and something to be experienced (luminosity, nondual, anatta, emptiness), then one has not realised and actualised spontaneous perfection. If there is the slightest dualistic effort it is not spontaneous perfection. However that does not mean you cannot practice concentration and mindfulness after spontaneous perfection, rather, you no longer practice dualistically in order to experience something separate from yourself in the past or future. It does not mean that there's no need for practice or no need for right effort, but practice becomes dynamic actualization.

For example - the lightning just flashed and the thunder roars. If I try to recapture that lightning flash and attempt to experience more of it, more of its radiance and emptiness, then I have split myself off from the immediate experience, I have established an experiencer and experience, a meditator and object of meditation. This is different from practice-enlightenment where each activity is the total exertion of all existence-time but instantly cast off without a trace. This practice actualization transcends meditator and meditation, it transcends dualistic practice where one imagines oneself to be a subjective experiencer aiming to attain an objective experience in the far off future. In practice actualization the immediate is the ultimate.

After realizing anatta, you see that there is no beyond. Nothing beyond this breath that is the total exertion of the cosmos. Nothing to attain, no beyond, only the utter perfection and completion of this actualized-form, where each step, each breath is none other than the utter perfection actualized in its immediacy. Awakening/buddha-nature/etc is not in some distant imaginary future, it is this actualized-form in its utter perfection.

Any attempt to be more nondual, be more "anatta" or be more "empty" is already the propensities of ignorance in action, and the lack of the deep realization and actualization that anatta is always already so, and that all dharmas are already fundamentally quiescent and non-arising in nirvana. The slightest attempt to bridge an imaginary gap is already a sign of ignorance. The slightest attempt to capture an experience is already a sign of ignorance that imputes intrinsic phenomena and characteristics.

I wrote yesterday:

I do not experience an inherently existing physical universe, nor do I experience an inherently existing awareness/Self/Brahman. I experience a fourth alternative (to the normal, spiritual/metaphysical, physical). My direct experience is without a who, where, or when, and yet there is not just blankness or nothing. I think spontaneous presencing is a good term. That spontaneous and seamless presencing is not generated by a self/Self and yet is not 'inherently there in and of itself', rather it is spontaneously presencing via total exertion (conventionally expressed as dependent origination or conditionality), empty and luminous. It is not some self-existing metaphysical presence, Absolute or Being, nor is spontaneous presencing a formless entity - whatever arises is spontaneous presencing, always seen, heard, tasted and experienced. What that is not seen, not heard and not experienced, is merely our conceptual idea of what "Presence" is. Neither is spontaneous presencing an inherently existing universe, nor is spontaneous presence manifesting causelessly/randomly/by chance, rather that spontaneous presencing is none other than the Maha (great/boundless) total exertion of the seamless conditions of the three times and ten directions, however it is not a linear causality where cause and effect are strictly separate with an actor (cause) and acted-upon (effect). As Dogen said, "Cause is not before and effect is not after." and John Tan wrote in 2013, "Do you feel being caused or effected? It is just a single flow. Now when we see one, the 10000 things arise". You can say what I experience (there is no 'I') is a spontaneous presencing that is none other than a seamlessly interdependent, radiant and empty universe." - Soh, 2019

Soh:

"https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=50&t=38591&p=608447#p608447

Malcolm:

I doubt very much that Karl is an annihilationist. You have really misunderstood his point, quite grievously. What he and the karmapas are implying is that there never were sentient beings to begin with. This is not controversial. Haribhadra, a Madhyamaka, points out than when one realizes buddhahood, one realizes too there was never a time when one was not a buddha. This insight does not depend on the Buddhanature doctrine at all, since it is straight out of the PP Sutras. Moreover, it is commonly stated that from the point of the view of the result, Buddhas only perceive other Buddhas, they do not perceive sentient beings, because to perceive obscurations would equal being obscured. Buddhas have no obscurations, hence they do not perceive them, ergo, they have no perception of sentient beings at all. Thus is another reason why Haribhadra points out that the path is entirely illusory from beginning to end, including the attainment of buddhahood.

Soh: sounds like what andre would say
also reminds me of my insight where i saw there are no buddhas vs sentient beings, or stages at all.. only spontaneous perfection. in terms of ultimate
[11:30 pm, 17/11/2021] John Tan: Actually in ultimate view, there is not any form of apprehension, spontaneous perfection has no perception.
[11:31 pm, 17/11/2021] John Tan: But if it is expressed this way it will be misunderstood as nihilistic.
oic..
Have you ever wondered why instantaneous and sudden enlightenment is possible?
the nature of mind is always so.. thats why realisation is sudden
Yes"

....

Also by Malcolm: I did. I know Karl. I am sure Karl is quite sure he exists, conventionally speaking, and is equally confident he will realize buddhahood eventually, that his rosary of moments of empty clarity, the all-basis, will continue through the state of Vajradharahood, once his adventitious obscurations are eliminated. What he is talking about is the consequences, as he sees it, of the point of view of Karmapa III and VIII. But as I outline above, this is not the radical departure you imagine it to be.

Your idea is the radical misunderstanding of what he is saying.

~ Possible Dangers and Sidetracks

~Thinking one is there when one isn't. As explained earlier, you need complete maturity of non-dual, anatta and emptiness wisdom, without which all notions of 'spontaneous perfection' simply leads to swimming in a sea of delusion, laziness and apathy, letting one's habitual tendencies and delusions run amok "spontaneously", leading nowhere. Many people talk about spontaneous perfection even at Stage 1 or even prior to Stage 1. This only causes great harm to themselves and others.

~Nihilistic misinterpretation of spontaneous perfection: thinking that there is no practice after spontaneous perfection, a wrong understanding of non-doing. The correct understanding should be practice-enlightenment. It is not an excuse for laziness and inactivity or letting our habitual and karmic propensities run wild, mistaking that as a form of "spontaneity". (Spontaneity is rather referring to the non-arising, empty nature and non-dual luminosity being 'spontaneously perfected' by its own accord in all manifest and actualized forms as there is no more trace of doubt that all arising are by nature so). Worse still, some people fall into the extremes of nihilism, thinking that "my lust is spontaneously perfected, my anger is spontaneously perfected, my malice and violence and other unwholesome behaviours are spontaneously perfected" and so on, thinking that because all manners of afflictions are already spontaneously perfected, there is no need for practice at all.

It is important to understand that all vehicles and teachings of Buddhadharma, from Theravada to Zen to Dzogchen and Mahamudra is about liberation from sufferings and emotional afflictions, even if the exact means, method and approaches may differ somewhat. The actualization of the spontaneous perfection of wisdom will lead to the self-liberation of afflictions. The 84,000 dharma doors taught by Buddha are only for the sole purpose of the pacification and liberation of the three poisons of passion, aggression and delusion. If one does not experience this liberation, all notions of spontaneous perfection or emptiness or anatta is merely intellectual and conceptual (it does not mean that once anatta is initially realized all afflictions are immediately 100% gone all the time, but it should be the beginning of experiencing liberation in real-time). A wrong and nihilistic grasp of spontaneous perfection and emptiness is not only useless, it is worse than useless and often causes great harm and prevents progress. I have heard of people saying "earthly desires are enlightenment" as if they should be celebrated. I'm sorry, but this is plain wrong, no matter who said it or which master said it.

"Tregchö and thögal involve a great deal of intent and involve structured retreats.

Keep that [Mr. J] nonsense out of this group. Thanks.

...

Many people fail to understand that to get to a point of non-striving in Dzogpachenpo, a great deal of effort must occur in order to get to that point.

The view of Dzogchen is simple in theory, but difficult in practice due to the presence of habitual tendencies which obstruct even the beginner's ability to remain in equipoise.

This is why for example, Jean-Luc Achard compares retreat to wetting a cloth. If we only wet a cloth sometimes it will dry quickly, no water is retained, however if you wet the cloth a great deal, and often, it will remain wet. The same principle applies to a Dzogchen practitioner, which is why retreat is indispensable for serious practitioners.

Tregchö retreats are meant to "wet the cloth" greatly so that it will not dry once the practitioner leaves retreat to engage his or her three doors and sense consciousnesses more actively in daily life.

People who believe Tregchö involves no effort and no striving, and believe they have understood its meaning without extended practice should seek a qualified teacher and learn properly in order to bring some clarity to their understanding." - Kyle Dixon, 2019, Nonsectarian Dzogchen Atiyoga & Mahamudra

"We still have to meditate, but this meditation becomes directionless (or more accurately, aimlessness and wishlessness -- one of the three doors of liberation) and without subject-object (I'm here, trying to get 'there') but immediate practice-enlightenment or instant actualization in every encounter or activity, sitting, walking, working, encountering people. This effort is not the same as the dualistic effort of trying to attain a result in the future, or trying to sustain a subject/object structure by bringing in a dualistic form of watching.

There can and should be effort and focus in practice, but this effort and focus is applied in a way that completely dissolves the subject/object structure rather than retain or strengthen it, for example when being mindful of the breathing, the breathing is its own attention and awareness, there is no dualistic attempt to 'shine the spotlight of awareness on an object or a subject'. Effort and focus, and effortlessness becomes one. This is why Dogen's teachings are very useful here to counteract the nihilism of the wrongful understanding of non-action. The kind of "doing" or "action" we should be rid of is not "don't have to make any effort" but "not being affected by results/gain/loss", for it is the attachment to the results that are karmic. Each step, each breath, becomes the ends rather than the means -- it is the actualization of enlightenment/Buddha-nature rather than a means to get enlightenment in the future.

And this, also happens to be true non-meditation and non-action, beyond the sense of there being a meditator-meditation and actor-action." - Soh, 2018

"People that have gone into the nihilistic understanding of 'non-doing' ended up in a mess. You see that those having right understanding of 'non-doing' are free, yet you see discipline, focus and peace in them. Like just sitting and walking... ...in whatever they endeavor. Fully anatta." - John Tan, 2018

[18/10/18, 7:20:52 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ya some people like thich nhat hanh has a very peaceful feel even when walking etc
[18/10/18, 7:25:19 PM] John Tan: Yes in whatever they endeavor.

[18/10/18, 7:25:36 PM] John Tan: Fully anatta.
[18/10/18, 10:33:47 PM] Soh Wei Yu: "Oprah Winfrey: Already just being in your presence for a short time, I feel less stressed than I did when I started out the day, because you have such a peaceful aura that follows you and that you carry with yourself. Are you always this content and peaceful?

Thich Nhat Hanh: This is my training, this is my practice, to live every moment like that. Relaxed, dwelling peacefully in the present moment, and respond to events with compassion."
[18/10/18, 10:34:45 PM] John Tan: This is most difficult as it is actualization. Insight is just beginning. If you simply just based on insight and do not actualize your insight in practice meeting situations, you will not have genuine and deep understanding.

"One time, Huineng, old Buddha of Caoxi, asked a monk, "do you depend upon practice and enlightenment?."

The monk replied, "It's not that there is no practice and no enlightenment. Its just that it's not possible to divide them".

This being so, know that the undividedness of practice and enlightenment is itself the Buddha ancestors.

A walk with Dogen into our time xxv
The Essential Dogen: Writings of the Great Zen Master"

“Practice after anatta, emptiness, spontaneous perfection

I think some discussions came up recently relating to spontaneous perfection and practice, and I have commented similar things before but I will say it again.

Even after anatta, emptiness, where everything is tasted as nondual luminosity that is empty like reflections, all spontaneously perfected without effort and action, it does not contradict the importance of practice but practice becomes dynamic actualization or practice-enlightenment. Practices are no longer done in order to achieve a future goal because the very act of practicing is the actualization of the spontaneous perfection in the here and now (only conventionally speaking - there is no here and now to be found). The act of breathing, that very breath itself, the chanting itself, the whatever practice you do becomes the total exertion of spontaneously perfected empty presencing... the practice brings forth the simultaneous qualities of shamatha and vipashyana and mind is at peace, still, attentive and sharp and focused not in a contrived way but in a natural state of no mind. Whatever practices that are done, are done for shamatha and vipashyana for this is the sole means of liberation, even if the object of meditation or non-meditation is simply resting as the nature of mind.

Spontaneous perfection and non meditation thus is not the same as the nihilistic understanding of non action and non meditation as if literally one should not meditate or do any practices whatsoever. That becomes neo advaita teaching and unfortunately it seems that many people (the likes of Mr. J) interpret dzogchen and kunjed gyalpo that way turning it

into something no different from neo-advaita. Such people will reason that a wild untamed mind is of no harm to some inherently perfect awareness like the clouds never hinder the sky, which in turns reifies a background awareness, negates the influence of karmic propensities and importance of practices and view, etc. Their inherently existing awareness is so ultimate and absolute that it is never touched, affected, harmed nor improved by karmic traces nor actions and efforts (hence they reason, why the need for practices?), but they will never understand that brahman is not more ultimate and cosmic than a single breath or act of sitting, that there is no mirror besides ongoing reflections, an empty presencing no where to reside (Residing as an unstained background or all subsuming ground is just more effort, not true effortlessness). Hence Just sitting, eating, shitting, sleeping becomes both ground and path, and not even a trace of subject and object, meditator and object of meditation arise in that moment of actualization. It is not that there is no practice and enlightenment but they are undivided. This is why I find the soto zen emphasis on practice-enlightenment a useful antidote to such nihilistic neo-advaitic view.

John tan also recently wrote, “It is how it is presented. It is important to bring across the point that realization is uncaused or "not made". But the methods are effective tools and provide the necessary conditions.”

Even if you are a 10th bhumi or 12th bhumi on the verge of full Buddhahood (which is to say the least, very unlikely), practice is important. Heck, even the Buddha himself practices and goes for months long retreats regularly focusing on anapanasati (mindfulness of breathing) according to his own words and all the arahants do likewise even though they have “done what is to be done”. The buddha and arahants continue to benefit from practice and meditation. Their practice is practice-enlightenment, an actualization of true nature, not practicing for enlightenment. “

“Edmond Cigale interesting. But I am unfamiliar with visualisations and transformations of tantra. I am mostly into simple breathing practices, yoga and mindfulness. But I am sure many tantric practices can be very helpful

Kunjed gyalpo posts a lot of critiques about practices (of the “eight lower vehicles”) that involve modifying experience into something else as it is caught up with acceptance and rejection. For me I think it is a critique of the attitude and not necessarily the practices. For example the practices I do, even in breathing and yoga, is done in a way that relaxes into the natural state of everything as it is without modification, acceptance or rejection, desires or aversion. Pure empty presence, spontaneously perfected without effort.

I can breathe hard, walk fast, do stretches, and everything is spontaneously perfected as empty presence without effort. But it does not mean effort and exertion is not present in the practices.

But without the correct insight, it is hard for any practices to be done without dualistic desire/aversion/modification/fabrication.”

Late 2007:

(9:31 AM) Thusness: Supreme Source is a very good book. You should get it.

(9:32 AM) AEN: ic.. actually last year i already wanna buy it then i tink looks a bit chim.. next time then i buy la
(9:32 AM) AEN: haha
(9:32 AM) Thusness: But it should be regarded as the final path of realisation.
(9:32 AM) AEN: also gd.. i tink start on easier books better. but i going to get supreme source also
(9:32 AM) AEN: oic
(9:32 AM) Thusness: So without non-duality and emptiness, one should not think that he/she understood the teachings.
(9:32 AM) AEN: icic..
(9:35 AM) Thusness: The translator is also pretty good. Nevertheless he is unable to bring out the essence of it but Chogyal Namkhai Rinpoche comments are wonderful. How amazing that the same words undergoing different translators can be so drastically different.
(9:36 AM) Thusness: The books translated by John is not as clear as those translated by Adriano Clemente.
(9:45 AM) Thusness: I am in self-liberation now.
(9:46 AM) Thusness: for the past 1-2 weeks, my practice has been on going without effort.
(9:46 AM) Thusness: and this supreme source touches me deeply.
(9:47 AM) AEN: oic..
(9:47 AM) Thusness: You should get it.
(9:47 AM) AEN: wah you in 10th bhumi now?
(9:47 AM) Thusness: cannot say so lah...
(9:47 AM) Thusness: don't anyhow say
(9:47 AM) AEN: hahaha
(9:48 AM) Thusness: the conditions can differ a lot...and the fruition differ too.
(9:48 AM) AEN: wat do you mean
(9:48 AM) Thusness: I may have experienced the essence but is not at that stage.
(9:48 AM) Thusness: so don't anyhow go around say.
(9:49 AM) AEN: hahaha ok
(9:49 AM) Thusness: but there is no more meditation needed for me.
(9:49 AM) AEN: oh
(9:49 AM) AEN: so are you still meditating?
(9:49 AM) Thusness: hmm....still but in essence, it is a different dimension.
(9:49 AM) Thusness: but there is no more meditation needed for me
(6:00 PM) AEN: http://www.khandro.net/Buddhism_maha_stages.htm
(6:00 PM) AEN: The Dagpo Kagyu tradition matches Mahamudra in 5 Paths to the 10 bhumis. In that system, the 5 Paths are that of:
1. Accumulation
2. Juncture
3. Seeing
4. Meditation
5. No-More-Meditation

(6:00 PM) AEN: or
(6:00 PM) AEN: 1. One-Pointedness
2. Simplicity
3. One-Taste
4. Non-Meditation
(6:01 PM) AEN: "From there you can go up through the bhumis, starting with the lowest level of practice of the second stage of realization, that of freedom from projection; this would be the second bodhisattva bhumi. The middle level of practice at that state would be the third, and the highest level of practice at that stage is the fourth. Then, the three stages of yogic realization of one taste correspond to the fifth, sixth, and seventh. Then finally, the three levels of practice at the highest level of realization correspond to the last three, the eighth, ninth, and tenth bodhisattva bhumis. Once one has attained the eighth bodhisattva bhumi, this is considered to be the enlightenment of the Buddha, but it has to be filled out in the ninth and finally, in the tenth stage."
(6:01 PM) AEN: it says "Once one has attained the eighth bodhisattva bhumi, this is considered to be the enlightenment of the Buddha, but it has to be filled out in the ninth and finally, in the tenth stage."
(6:01 PM) AEN: and that is the "no more meditation stage"
(1:36 PM) Thusness: the non-meditation is not the meditation layman is talking about.
(1:37 PM) Thusness: to layman, it should be non-practice
(1:37 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:37 PM) Thusness: because practice by itself to the lay goes beyond sitting meditation.
(1:38 PM) Thusness: Lesser One-Taste: Seventh bhumi
Medium One-Taste: Eighth bhumi
Greater One-Taste: Ninth bhumi (to immediate attainment of Tenth)
(1:39 PM) Thusness: this is interesting.
(1:39 PM) Thusness: Greater One-Taste to immediate attainment of tenth...
(1:40 PM) Thusness: it should be noted that at the lesser One-Taste, there is also the temptation to think that meditation is no more necessary.
(1:40 PM) Thusness: This is the case that is written by Longchen.
(1:41 PM) Thusness: But when insights deepen to include emptiness and integrating conditions, further insight of non-meditation arise.
(1:42 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:43 PM) Thusness: as self is (almost totally disregarded) and dualistic worldview is replaced with Oneness, one never says 'self' as there is never anything inherent.
(1:43 PM) Thusness: any arising is buddha nature but it is always in meeting, in arising, in DO.
(1:43 PM) Thusness: and practice is always in direct arising when condition meets.
(1:44 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:44 PM) AEN: you know dharma dan also say after arhat no need meditate rite? even tho its still beneficial, but theres no more need
(1:44 PM) AEN: something like tat

(1:44 PM) AEN: but he still meditates i tink
(1:44 PM) Thusness: hmm....where he say hah?
(1:44 PM) Thusness: you got the url?
(1:45 PM) AEN: ok hold on
(1:45 PM) AEN: http://web.mac.com/danielmingram/iWeb/Daniel%20Ingram%27s%20Dharma%20Blog/The%20Blook/51EE7943-0A69-488A-B5B0-3C8F2EF7C5E8.html
(1:45 PM) AEN:
Finally, the Wisdom Eye cycles and insight cycles all converge, and the thing stays open from then on, which is to say that at that point it all seems the same whether or not the eye is open, which it actually was. That being seen, nothing can erode or disturb the centerlessness of perspective. Done is what is to be done, and life goes on. That there are arahats who have opened the Wisdom Eye but had it fade and those who have opened it and had it stay open is rarely mentioned but worth knowing.
For the arahat who has kept the thing open, there is nothing more to be gained on the ultimate front from insight practices, as ?done is what is to be done?. That said, insight practices can still be of great benefit to them for a whole host of reasons, there is a ton they can learn just like everyone else about everything else there is to learn. They can grow, develop, change, work and participate in this strange human drama just like everyone else.
(1:45 PM) AEN: not really meditate la, but 'insight practice'
(1:47 PM) AEN: wat you tink
(1:47 PM) Thusness: yes.
(1:48 PM) Thusness: very true but that clarity should include emptiness nature, not just that one-taste (non-dual).
(1:49 PM) Thusness: There is a difference.
(1:49 PM) AEN: oic..
(1:49 PM) AEN: but you said dharma dan knows about emptiness rite?
(1:50 PM) Thusness: hm...yes but it is very difficult to differentiate
(1:50 PM) Thusness: there are two distinct experiences
(1:51 PM) Thusness: one is like what longchen said and one is really meditation is treated as irrelevant
(1:51 PM) Thusness: that is sitting meditation is completely irrelevant but one will still sit.
(1:53 PM) AEN: icic..
(1:53 PM) Thusness: this is because of the state of equanimity, as every arising blossoms into lotus and therefore meditation is deemed irrelevant.
(1:53 PM) Thusness: so this is the state of non-meditation one should understand.
(1:54 PM) Thusness: there will come a clarity of this understanding of the entire workings and one's practice is 24/hrs in all moments because 'meeting conditions' and let arises are more important than anything.
(1:56 PM) Thusness: and one practices this in 'meeting conditions' with strong solid 'non-dual and emptiness' understanding as the base.
(1:57 PM) Thusness: This i would say can arise in middle level to high level of One-Taste
(1:58 PM) AEN: icic..

(1:59 PM) Thusness: I do not know about how they view non-meditation...
(1:59 PM) Thusness: is the highest level of non-meditation full enlightenment?
(1:59 PM) Thusness: equal Buddha achievement?
(2:00 PM) Thusness: If it is not, then what i said is already non-meditation.
(2:01 PM) Thusness: because merits is needed to become Buddha that sort of stage but in terms of insight, it is the same.

...

Thusness:

"After this insight, one must also be clear of the way of anatta and the path of practice. Many wrongly conclude that because there is no-self, there is nothing to do and nothing to practice. This is precisely using "self view" to understand "anatta" despite having the insight.

It does not mean because there is no-self, there is nothing to practice; rather it is because there is no self, there is only ignorance and the chain of afflicted activities. Practice therefore is about overcoming ignorance and these chain of afflictive activities. There is no agent but there is attention. Therefore practice is about wisdom, vipassana, mindfulness and concentration. If there is no mastery over these practices, there is no liberation. So one should not bullshit and psycho ourselves into the wrong path of no-practice and waste the invaluable insight of anatta. That said, there is the passive mode of practice of choiceness awareness, but one should not misunderstand it as the "default way" and such practice can hardly be considered "mastery" of anything, much less liberation."

....

"People that have gone into the nihilistic understanding of 'non-doing' ended up in a mess. You see those having right understanding of 'non-doing' are free, yet you see discipline, focus and peace in them.

Like just sitting and walking... ...in whatever they endeavor. Fully anatta."

....

In my opinion many of our great aspirations and high views turn empty talks easily. After the direct insight of anatta, it opens the gate that allows one to experience effortlessly all sensations that arise without duality, without fear, without doership and without ownership. Many are unable to see the "Whys" and "Hows" of "directness" so don't waste your insights that have given the opportunity in this life. Train yourself to do that with sincerity and dedication first. Then you will be fully in touch with your original purity; you will be genuinely in touch with peace and openness.

...

"If we want to experience fully and have genuine peace, be very sincere in sensing all your sensations for pretense, blames, rejections and contractions... ...don't rush... slow down your thoughts and scan all your sensations for these... see all these traces... see all these come from the "I"s and "mine"s... develop a strong willingness to let go with your insights of anatta. If you can for a brief moment be free from the conceit of I, the craving of mine and the background of I AM, that moment you are respectable even to the gods.

I do not want you to get into too high views and lose touch with genuine and simple practice."

....

We need to have time to practice and be focused otherwise very soon we will realize we have wasted this life.

...

I did tell him to visualize light and practice breathing with full no-self anatta insight intact.

The purpose of visualization and to have a prolong period of practice focus on breathing with anatta insight intact is to allow him to have glimpses of the relationship between visualization, concentration and the 3 states."

~ Original Enlightenment/Nature/Liberation is a Wrong View

Spontaneous Perfection can be misunderstood or misinterpreted as "original enlightenment", which is a substance view – a wrong view. Just because the terms sound similar doesn't mean they are similar. They are completely unrelated.

Session Start: Thursday, 25 February, 2010

(9:00 PM) Thusness: anyway your answer in newbuddhist forum is no good.
(9:00 PM) Thusness: you got to have a clearer picture of what is pure subjectivity and you must not be confused with subjective and objective reality. that is, are you skewed towards subjective reality or are you skewed towards objective reality. if beyond these 2 extremes, what is it...and what is the purpose of having right view of experiential reality? Buddhism is concerned with experiential reality. many only understand in terms of concepts...the article you posted in buddhism forum by Mr. J expresses it well. That is, he understands it directly. You are still unable to integrate non-dual experience and DO into your view.
(9:13 PM) AEN: oic.. what does Mr. J understand directly.. D.O? i don't really understand what you mean by not confused with subjective and objective reality
(9:31 PM) Thusness: you are misunderstanding 'objective reality' with experiential reality. like the 'body' is just a mental construct that once seem so real, objective reality too must be treated as a mental construct no different from the case of the 'body'
(9:34 PM) AEN: oic..

(9:34 PM) Thusness: however when you do that, you might mistaken it as pure subjectivity. therefore you must practice and continue to refine your understanding till you completely purified all these tendencies to treat things as truly existing as in first 'mental constructs', then presence.
(9:37 PM) AEN: 'then presence'?
(9:37 PM) Thusness: what you have expressed so far cannot show clarity that you have integrate your views into just one whole field of experiential reality.
(9:38 PM) AEN: like what david carse said 'what all this is is All That Is, pure Being Consciousness Bliss Outpouring; it is your perception of it as a physical world that is maya, illusion.' however the article of Mr. J does but the view isn't clear.
(9:38 PM) AEN: oic. you mean Mr. J talks about dependent origination?
(9:38 PM) Thusness: nope... but he manage to understand from his realization and direct experience to resolve all into One Mind.
(9:39 PM) AEN: icic.. its like what david loy said rite: That samsara is nirvana is a major tenet of Mahayana philosophy. "Nothing of samsara is different from nirvana, nothing of nirvana is different from samsara. That which is the limit of nirvana is also the limit of samsara; there is not the slightest difference between the two." [1] And yet there must be some difference between them, for otherwise no distinction would have been made and there would be no need for two words to describe the same state. So Nagarjuna also distinguishes them: "That which, taken as causal or dependent, is the process of being born and passing on, is, taken noncausally and beyond all dependence, declared to be nirvana." [2] There is only one reality -- this world, right here -- but this world may be experienced in two different ways. Samsara is the "relative" world as usually experienced, in which "I" dualistically perceive "it" as a collection of objects which interact causally in space and time. Nirvana is the world as it is in itself, nondualistic in that it incorporates both subject and object into a whole which, Madhyamika insists, cannot be characterized (Chandrakirti: "Nirvana or Reality is that which is absolved of all thought-construction"), but which Yogacara nevertheless sometimes calls "Mind" or "Buddhanature," and so forth.
(9:43 PM) Thusness: one taste in both essence and nature of all arising. but even at that phase, it is not One Reality as in Identical reality. or a truly existing 'One Whole Reality'. this is what a practitioner after going through One Mind or the Advaita Vedanta experience will conclude
(9:46 PM) Thusness: what is the truth of this 'One Whole Reality' that a practitioner after maturing non-dual experience? Even a practitioner after maturing this state will not be able to sync his view with this experience. because he is using a dualistic expression and not a DO view.
(9:48 PM) AEN: oic..
(9:49 PM) Thusness: this is the same as one that experience the pure presence of "Iness" and say that this "I" is the same "I" in you as in him and me. in non-dual state, the practitioner will still fall into the same trap -- the one whole reality. Get it?
(9:52 PM) AEN: hmm.. but what you mean by *but even at that phase, it is not One Reality as in Identical reality or a truly existing 'One Whole Reality'
- you mean at that level there is some understanding of emptiness

(9:52 PM) Thusness: no. what is the 'One Reality' that David Carse is talking about? is this a Subjective Reality or an Objective Reality?
(9:54 PM) AEN: neither
(9:55 PM) Thusness: an integration where there is no distinction that can be found between the subject-object-ive reality, as an integrated whole?
(9:56 PM) AEN: yah.. just oneness?
(9:56 PM) Thusness: is there such a 'Oneness Reality'? When we fall into this trap after non-dual experience, we are falling into the same trap as claiming that the 'I' in you is the same 'I' in me after the experience of "I AMness". so neither subjective nor objective nor the integration of both nor the interaction of both. we think in such a way because of our 'inherent view'...that is why I said experience is not enough, you need the right view. so after this phase of One Mind, don't get over excited, refine the view (anatta and DO). also understand why this is important to end suffering
(10:06 PM) AEN: oic.. how is it important to end suffering?
(10:07 PM) Thusness: why are you asking me? I ask you to find out and you ask me.
(10:07 PM) AEN: oic.. can you read through my post
http://newbuddhist.com/forum/showthread.php?t=4831&page=2
(11:33 PM) Thusness: no...no good. don't write like that. you are confusing ppl. think through first before you post
(11:34 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:35 PM) Thusness: delete that post first...
(11:35 PM) AEN: ya deleted
(11:35 PM) Thusness: when you write like that, you are like writing for the sake of writing. write about what do you think is the cause. why do people after direct experience came to that conclusion. what happen when that dualistic knot is gone
(11:38 PM) Thusness: what sort of reality you are talking about? think through first. don't just blah something you do not know
(11:39 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:39 PM) Thusness: many are very sincere in those stuff they wrote. and that includes element. he knows what he is writing
(11:40 PM) AEN: icic..
(11:40 PM) Thusness: do not write for the sake of writing. subjectivity9 is also sincere, writing from his own experience. Just that he is unable to see.
(11:41 PM) AEN: icic..
(11:41 PM) Thusness: what does liberation mean? to a dualistic mind, what does it mean? to a non-dual mind, what does it mean? to a practitioner that has matured his non-dual experience and is free from the view of a source, a center, a reference, what is liberation? so don't just talk about self-liberation as if you have reached tat state. you got to know what it meant
(11:44 PM) AEN: oic..
(11:44 PM) Thusness: when you say that, you are not discussing... so what is liberation when your mind is dualistic? how do you understand it?

(11:44 PM) AEN: by disassociation?
(11:45 PM) Thusness: through disassociation...yes. you always want to dis-associate. when you are non-dual what happen? when anatta what happened? when there is no source behind, what is there to dis-associate? so what is it like? and what is meant by self-liberation in this sense? it does not mean you are already liberated as like what you expressed...
(11:46 PM) Thusness: sound liberates. what does that mean? it just mean that do not attempt to think liberation in terms of dis-association. if you are not dis-associating, then how? it is the way a practitioner 'understand practice' after maturing his experiential insight of anatta into the natural state. it does not mean nothing to do, or it already liberates no.... it does not mean that
(11:50 PM) AEN: oic.. does it mean that without disassociating nor grasping, phenomena itself arise and subside on itself
(11:53 PM) Thusness: phenomena is also arising and subsiding
(11:53 PM) Thusness: is always
so don't talk about that
(11:53 PM) AEN: icic
(11:53 PM) Thusness: just write what i told you. it is not that there is nothing to do as in the case of the advaita
(11:54 PM) AEN: oic
(11:55 PM) Thusness: don't talk as if you already know what self-liberation is. but say when the mind is dualistic, how it perceives liberation. and when non-dual, how he perceives it to be? when anatta, what is it like if there is no source, how is one to dis-associate? what is liberation like when a person experientially and truly realized that? how by resting in a dualistic and inherent view mistake 'dis-association' as the path. you posted an article in the past that spoke briefly about it
(11:58 PM) AEN: at sgforums?
(11:59 PM) Thusness: yeah...forgot his name...in your blog too
(12:00 AM) AEN: djhampa?
i don't remember posting his post in my blog lhe
(12:02 AM) Thusness: nope
(12:03 AM) Thusness: Dr. John Welwood *(Soh: Reflection and Presence: The Dialectic of Awakening, a good read* https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/11/reflection-and-presence-dialectic-of.html *)*
(12:03 AM) AEN: ooh icic
(12:05 AM) Thusness: you must understand what i told you above. what is meant by dualistic and inherent view and its power to shape our experience. so you know what is the relationship with the right view?
(12:08 AM) AEN: and liberation?
(12:08 AM) Thusness: yes
(12:09 AM) AEN: yeah.. better understand now.
(12:13 AM) Thusness: so what is the meaning of 'always and already so'? and what is practice like?

(12:16 AM) AEN: back sorry.. someone called me, wrong number. always and already so means awareness isnt separated and is actually everything arising moment to moment, so practice is just experiencing everything without dualistic and inherent view?
(12:17 AM) Thusness: what has that got to do with self liberation?
(12:17 AM) AEN: it does not require disassociating, just experiencing everything as it is without dualistic and inherent view?
(12:18 AM) Thusness: are you able to do that?
(12:18 AM) AEN: no
(12:18 AM) Thusness: why?
(12:18 AM) AEN: bcos i still have dualistic and inherent views
(12:18 AM) Thusness: yes. therefore you must know that because we see with such views, without such views, that is liberation. that is why right view is important. if 'dualistic and inherent' view is dissolved from the deepest depth of our consciousness, that already is liberation. therefore practice is to meet conditions and see whether inherent and dualistic view arise. if it arises, then how could there be no suffering
(12:21 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:21 AM) Thusness: therefore ignorance is the cause of suffering. it is the wrong view that shapes the experience. that experience with the wrong view is what that causes psychological and spiritual pain
(12:22 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:22 AM) Thusness: any moment you have that experience it is always so. so practice is dynamic to see such tendencies arise
(12:23 AM) AEN: icic..
(12:24 AM) Thusness: because a practitioner mature his non-dual and anatta experience, his practice is dynamic as he realizes that all arising already so and always is so -- luminous and empty but we mistaken it as dualistic and inherent. it is the deeply rooted wrong view that shape and distort experience that causes all problems. get it?
(12:25 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:25 AM) Thusness: it is not negative feelings is already liberated...all sort of nonsense. did i teach you that like what Mr. J said? ignorance of seeing separation and inherent existence causes all these problems, and negative feelings arise because of that. so at that moment when you see that it is non-dual and empty, it liberates. if you do not experience that at the moment, how can you be liberated. when you try to get rid of the anger, you can't...either you are split or there is something inherent in you. so when you see the 'nature and essence' of any arising be it negative emotions or whatever as empty and luminous, it liberates. You see it with your entire body/mind/soul therefore it liberates. if you din see it, no. get it?
(12:34 AM) Thusness: you must see the nature and essence of all arising as so.
(12:37 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:39 AM) Thusness: therefore when Mr. J said, negative emotion is liberation, he is having inherent view. coz he sees awareness as the substance, and think that since it is it, it is liberation and yet feeling pain. so that is confusion due to desync of view and experience with no clarity of insight. not knowing what causes the pain
(12:40 AM) Thusness: so understand ignorance. understand how inherent and dualistic view causes the problem

(12:43 AM) AEN: icic.. you mean there is no pain when one experience self liberation?
(12:44 AM) Thusness: of course there is pain if there is pain. it is the all of what the sensations are
(12:44 AM) AEN: what you mean
(12:45 AM) Thusness: you mean when you taste sour you don't know that it is sour?
(12:45 AM) AEN: i know
(12:45 AM) Thusness: then when there is those sensations that arise due to the conditions, you deny those sensations? whatever that you have dissolved, it isn't there. whatever conditions that contribute to the arising, has to arise
(12:47 AM) AEN: oic.. but you said negative emotion is liberation is wrong view?

(12:50 AM) Thusness: only when you resolve that this pristine awareness is luminous yet empty, that is liberation
(12:50 AM) Thusness: not seeing pristine awareness as inherent and dual

Excerpts from Original Enlightenment and Original Nature is a wrong view / How did Ignorance originate etc

2009:
(7:34 PM) AEN: icic.. http://www.zenforuminternational.org/viewtopic.php?f=8...
(7:37 PM) AEN: namdrol says there cant be original enlightenment as that wld be the hindu teaching or atman (Namdrol = acarya malcolm smith)
(7:38 PM) Thusness: yes because they see non-dual as enlightenment
(7:38 PM) AEN: oic
(7:39 PM) Thusness: you mean e-sangha ban them? lol
(7:40 PM) AEN: yeah... alot of zen teachers and even moderators were banned during a period of time and e-sangha even received lawsuits thread etc
(7:40 PM) Thusness: by the way, that is also not hindu teachings
(7:40 PM) AEN: and members
there were also other issues i think... some don't believe in rebirth etc... and some other things
(7:40 PM) AEN: im not exactly sure what happened
(7:40 PM) Thusness: that is neo-advaita teaching
(7:40 PM) AEN: oic
(7:41 PM) Thusness: because we are already enlightened so why practice?
(7:41 PM) Thusness: yet this will arise another insight
so this is also necessary
(7:42 PM) Thusness: first of all if this is not true, how is it that so many practitioners are claiming that?
(7:42 PM) AEN: they have the view of an inherent consciousness?

(7:43 PM) Thusness: there must be certain experience or incomplete realization that led practitioners to such a conclusion. it too is a koan. if one stops at One Mind, it will most likely end up concluding that way. yet it is also important that you come to the same conclusion. 🙂
just like I AMness
(7:49 PM) AEN: icic.. the original enlightenment is realised at non dual ?
(7:49 PM) Thusness: yes
(7:50 PM) AEN: icic
(7:50 PM) Thusness: i think i told you we do not have a perfect nature right? we have a dependent originated nature
(7:50 PM) AEN: oic.. but at the same time its spontaneously perfected?
(7:51 PM) Thusness: however it is also important that you arrive at the same conclusion as those zen practitioners
(7:51 PM) AEN: oic
(7:52 PM) Thusness: that is different. i have already told you many times not to talk about spontaneous arising, liberation or perfection
(7:52 PM) AEN: icic..
(7:53 PM) Thusness: only after the direct insight of anatta and DO can you talk about that. this I have emphasized many times to you and written many times
(7:54 PM) AEN: oic..
(7:55 PM) Thusness: this is because after the insight of anatta and DO, you are already purified and clear of the wrong understanding. ignorance is the cause of suffering, when it dissolves, you are naturally and spontaneously perfected
(7:58 PM) AEN: icic.. but even when there is ignorance, our nature is spontaneously perfected right, just not realised?
(7:59 PM) Thusness: nope..
(7:59 PM) AEN: oic what you mean
(7:59 PM) Thusness: to me yes, to you no. for i know what it meant

...

Likewise that view is rejected in the text that Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith was explaining:
The Basis as Naturally Perfect 2.1.1.1.1 Nevertheless, first, the assertion of the basis as naturally perfect is confirmed by understanding the four wheels: [Thesis] Naturally perfect reality is unfragmented and whole. [Refutation] The refutation states that this assertion that the basis is naturally perfect is defective. If it is claimed that at the time of the cause [the basis] is naturally perfect, the result also will be naturally perfect, [15b] like the example of butter already being naturally perfect in milk. In the same way, is the cause established
or not established in the result? If it is established, the result becomes a cause. Since a result is then pointless, the cause (deluded sentient beings) would then turn into the result (buddhas). In that case, there would be no need for anyone to make effort. If the cause is not established in the result, the assertion of the natural perfection [of the basis] is defective. Further, if it is said, "[The basis] is established at the time of the cause, but it is not established at the time of the result," then natural perfection would alternate and become a view that falls into the extremes of existence and

nonexistence. If it is said, “Because [the basis] is naturally perfect, it isn’t anything at all,” then this is no different than the Cittamātra assertion that the dependent nature is ultimate. The Six Dimensions Tantra states: Since the cause and result are different, [the basis] too is not naturally
perfect. Likewise, if the cause and result were the same, effort would be meaningless. The two replies to the objection can be inferred. Here they will not be mentioned. Since the essence is pure from the beginning, saṃsāra is not established. [16a] Since the nature arises as a diversity, nirvāṇa is not established. Since the essence and nature are nondual, they are present as an intrinsic nature 64 that has never experienced delusion.
- Buddhahood in This Life, Dzogchen book/text by Vimalamitra translated by Acarya Malcolm Smith

.....

Another interesting post I saw by Arcaya Malcolm recently:

"Another interesting thing they do is try to show is that Dogen had a change of heart and rejected hongaku and BNI late in his life.

Noriaki cites this example, from the Shōbōgenzō shizen bhikkhu, as presented in Pruning the Bodhi Tree, pg. 123:

Some people say that, because the enlightenment of the Buddhas and Tathagatas encompass the whole world, even a speck of dust manifests that enlightenment. Because that enlightenment encompasses both subject and the object, mountains, rivers, earth, sun, moon, stars, and the four illusions and three poisons express it as well. To see mountains and rivers is to see the Tathagathas, and the four illusions and three poisons are the Buddha-dharma. To see a speck of dust is to see the dharma-dhatu and each spontaneous act is a manifestation of supreme enlightenment. They say this is the great understanding and call it a Patriarchal transmission. In latter-day Sung China, those who subscribe to this view are as numerous as rice plants, hemp. bamboo, and reeds. Their [religious] lineage is unknown, but it is clear they do not understand Buddhism.

All and all an interesting book, quite relevant to the present discussion.

..."

"Elsewhere, Malcolm also said with regards to hongaku ("original enlightenment"), "Definitely a wrong view, even in Dzogchen.", "Chinese Buddhism departs from Indian Buddhism in many respects. Still, the idea of "inherent awakening" is patently absurd and cannot be taken literally or seriously by any means." - https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=97&t=19453&p=283507&hilit=hongaku#p283507

Session Start: Tuesday, October 14, 2008

(11:21 PM) Thusness: We do not have an original nature, we have an empty nature. That has no beginning nor end. To visualize a purest state from start is a dualistic view. But it is not appropriate for you to answer this question yet.

For it contradicts with many claims of those masters that focus on luminosity and have not understood their empty nature.

(11:26 PM) AEN: icic.. the poster follows korean zen, i tink zen master seung sahn etc

(11:29 PM) Thusness: Getting 'lost' and becoming dualistic is natural when we develop those conditions that make us 'lost'. Being attached to our luminosity is one of the factor. The assumption that there is a purest state and we will not become dualistic is itself a dualistic view.

(11:32 PM) AEN: oic..

(11:32 PM) Thusness: Luminous yet empty, this is our nature. Understand?

(11:34 PM) AEN: think so.. so theres no purest state, when condition is there delusion manifest? btw you said i shldnt post this?

(11:42 PM) Thusness: Yes. this is just to let you understand conceptually.

(11:44 PM) AEN: icic.. ok

(11:45 PM) Thusness: So that you are not trapped in a dualistic framework of understanding things. When DO replaces the dualistic framework, we will understand naturally. When DO replaces the dualistic framework, we will understand naturally. Because your views is still very much inherent/dualistic, you find it hard to understand. Therefore whatever said is quickly distorted. let DO re-orientate you and practice 'dropping'

(11:54 PM) AEN: icic.. ok

(11:56 PM) Thusness: It takes many many years to re-orientate urself and you have to undergo those phases I told you.

(11:56 PM) AEN: oic.. which phases

(11:57 PM) Thusness: the six stages. In which 5 and 6 are most important. 5 is the great stability. You become non conceptual and experience directly. Now you must practice 'dropping' and go non-conceptual. But non-conceptuality should not be the object of practice, it must be natural. It comes naturally after the arising of anatta insight. And after that, give up all thoughts can *(and?)* continue to 'drop' till anatta is most clear and vivid. Till you become fully non-dual and non-conceptual. You must practice dropping, it is safer.

(12:04 AM) AEN: wat do you mean by it is safer

(12:05 AM) Thusness: If you don't want to experience side effects, then learn 'dropping'

(12:05 AM) AEN: icic.. what kind of side effects

(12:06 AM) Thusness: Give up and let go

(12:06 AM) AEN: oic.. when i meditate i can let go completely, and enter into an almost thoughtless state... but daily life v hard rite?

(12:06 AM) Thusness: Till you are open to all sensations naturally, vividly and effortlessly

(12:07 AM) Thusness: Difficult to tell you now lah

(12:08 AM) Thusness: You must summarize and be conceptually equipped with the right views first. But these views are provisional. but because we are so caught up in looking for meanings, we want to expand these views more then necessary. Then it becomes dangerous. It must go hand in hand with real experience. It can take few decades of practice b4 true insight dawns

(12:13 AM) AEN: oic... true insight as in prajna wisdom?

(12:19 AM) Thusness: Yes

~ Questions about Spontaneous Perfection

Someone asked: "Like someone asked in another post about crazy wisdom, can't a guru perform some unskillful action and call it not his doing, it's just happening and asking his disciple to surrender/accept to what is. That it is spontaneously perfect and that is is just seeing/hearing?"

Soh replied: “Actually surrendering is unrelated to spontaneous perfection. Surrendering requires the sense of a self, and a higher power, and is the path that leads to impersonality -- one of the four aspects of I AM. If one is still practicing surrendering, one has not even realized anatta yet, but it is a path of practice in the earlier stages of practice. In anatta there is in seeing just colors, in hearing just sounds, there is no hearer or seer, no self/Self at all and nothing to surrender to.

Spontaneous perfection just means everything is fundamentally in quiescence nirvana, non-arising, and luminous by nature, already anatta and empty, and effortlessly so. This must be realized and actualized otherwise it is just a bunch of fanciful intellectual words, completely useless and detrimental in fact. Spontaneous perfection has absolutely nothing to do with labelling something as 'perfect', which is just another delusion because now you are imputing some inherently existing characteristic of 'perfection' to some truly existing 'self' or 'phenomena' or worse, some imagined ontological and metaphysical 'perfect nature' (and you will impute that until you get to stage 5, as stage 1 to 4 all have varying delusions of an inherently existing perfect nature), and all notions of inherently existing characteristics are delusions. So before stable 5 and 6, any notion of 'spontaneous perfection' is just going to add fuel to the fire of delusions.

This is why you cannot skip Stages 1 to 7. You cannot, for example, go straight to Stage 7. Nobody can do that, except for a few people that are in the realm of myths and legends. So Stage 7 is basically useless for a beginner unless they have already very deep insights into 5 and 6 and then they can breakthrough to 7, otherwise it is going to be very harmful to emphasize on that point as it will certainly be misunderstood, so it's basically meaningless. Spontaneous perfection means the nature of anatta and emptiness, as realized in Stage 5 and 6, are spontaneously perfected in all manifestations, as the

nature of all manifestations or display are already anatta, empty and non-arisen from the beginning. So if 5 and 6 are not realized, well then, what the hell are you even talking about? 🤣

Hence, emphasis should rather be placed on giving rise to the correct insights, and then spontaneous perfection will come on its own when the conditions are right.

When actualized, there will not be unskillful actions driven by afflictions, as afflictions are liberated. This is why I am not into crazy wisdom (I am very cynical of any gurus of any traditions that act in ways that are interpreted as 'crazy wisdom', to me 'craziness' is just a sign of immaturity and ignorance and should not be given excuses. And why do we need to put gurus on a pedestal in the first place??? Why do people want to be blind sheep of some figure? All the abuse and corruption going on just makes me lose confidence in institutionalised religions and partly explains my distaste for the whole guru system and my anti-authoritarian inclinations. End of rant), as wisdom liberates afflictions and actions driven by afflictions. And anyone who still acts in an abusive and harmful manner to other fellow human beings are simply acting out of personal immaturity, and immaturity of their own insights and practice, regardless of whatever insights they've had."

Soh, 2019: "I am not a fan of guru devotion. I personally think it is unnecessary and causes all kinds of abuse like what we saw in andrew cohen and mooji. Even papaji is not without his own scandal.

To me, the job of the guru is to point, that is all. When the student realises their own nature it is their own direct seeing, not an act of faith or devotion. I do not advocate for any sort of blind devotion whatsoever, in fact I am quite against it. I am anti authoritarian. My attitude on this matter is probably closer to the two krishnamurties than certain forms of traditional buddhism.

And even the job of the guru is not restricted to gurus these days

https://greg-goode.com/article/from-the-age-of-the-guru-to-the-age-of-the-friend/

if someone can point out I AM then just call it what it is - someone who can point out I AM.

There is no need to worship such a person. That doesn't help. It is in fact far from the final insight, so why even make it a big deal?

If someone can point out non dual, just call it what it is - someone who can point out nondual.

There is no need to worship such a person. That doesn't help.

If someone can point out anatta, just call it what it is - someone who can point out anatta.

There is no need to worship such a person. That doesn't help.

If someone can point out emptiness, just call it what it is - someone who can point out emptiness.

There is no need to worship such a person. That doesn't help."

"https://www.facebook.com/cyberlogy/posts/10161685250515226

Soh Wei Yu

tcMhnaSnfseporecaho n7, 201Ssorre9udd · Shared with Your friends

Friends

Not a fan of guru devotion. Another example is Adi da samraj, who taught complete surrender to guru as the method to attain his realization (which by the way, is only at the level of one mind, not anatta or emptiness). How many of his students awakened to his realization? 0. Only abuses and trouble. There are far more effective approaches that results in realization much more directly and produces far better results (i.e. real life awakenings) without the need to surrender blindly and lose one's rationality to some human figure."

That being said, as Kyle Dixon (Krodha) pointed out here in his posts (2021) and Archaya Malcolm Smith has pointed out in his own ways, the guru-student relationship in Vajrayana Buddhism is not an irrational kind, which means if it is properly practiced, it is of a different nature than the kind which I have criticised in the quotations above:

"krodha commented on

Does anyone else have a problem with guru devotion?

Vajrayana
•
r/Buddhism
•Posted by
u/Libtardfairyboy
krodha
6 points · 1 day ago

Seems you aren't understanding how the relationship with the guru actually works in Vajrayāna.

krodha
8 points · 1 day ago

there is nothing special about them and they encourage you to put them on a pedestal until you realize this

Vajrayāna teachers do not encourage you to put them on a pedestal.

krodha

15 points · 1 day ago · edited 1 day ago

Also this person is misunderstanding so-called guru devotion, so the entire post is based on a false premise.

There are rules and guidelines that are meant to be followed which are intended to avoid and mitigate every issue raised in the OP.

The relationship with the teacher is contingent on those guidelines being followed by both teacher and student and the student can justifiably end the relationship with the teacher at any time if any inkling of abuse occurs.

krodha commented on Does anyone else have a problem with guru devotion?

User avatar

level 1

Painismyfriend

1d

Maybe Theravada will suit you more if you are more into meditation than in devotion. Theravadans have a teacher but you will be doing most of the practice by yourself. Choose a tradition that suits you and by the type of person you are.

2

User avatar

level 2

krodha

1d

> *"Maybe Theravada will suit you more if you are more into meditation than in devotion."*

Vajrayāna is likewise more into meditation than devotion.

User avatar
level 3
Painismyfriend
.
1d

Guru devotion seems to be a key component of it though which OP is having trouble accepting.
2

Vajrayana
•
r/Buddhism
•Posted by
u/Libtardfairyboy
krodha
5 points · 1 day ago

Not the sappy authoritarian-worship doormat relinquish-all-self-sovereignty type of devotion which leaves room for exploitation and abuse that OP is concerned about.

krodha
5 points · 1 day ago

"Maybe Theravada will suit you more if you are more into meditation than in devotion."

Vajrayāna is likewise more into meditation than devotion."

"krodha
6 points · 9 hours ago · edited 9 hours ago

The role of the guru is to point to your inner awakened nature and provide a practical framework for experientially discovering that nature and integrating with it. That nature is the real guru.

I would run in the opposite direction of any guru who wants to be worshipped.

I have always greatly respected my gurus, and are greatly indebted to them for their kindness and generosity, and I tell my current teacher that and make sure he knows how appreciated he is and the profound effect he has had on my path and life in general. I can never repay him. But I don't worship him, and if I did he would tell me to stop, and would probably think I've gone crazy.

krodha
2 points · 9 hours ago

If a Vajrayāna guru promotes or requests being worshipped I would interpret that as a red flag.

Most teachers are very clear that the true guru is the nature of your mind, and their role is only to facilitate providing teachings that allow students to discover that nature for themselves.

For example Chögyal Namkhai Norbu always said his role was to help his students become independent as quickly as possible so none of us needed him."

Kyle Dixon/Krodha, 2023:

"Guru devotion is not important. "Devotion" in Vajrayāna simply means a solid interest in the teachings. People should be weary of any group which asks you to have a strong devotion in the teacher. When Vajrayāna teachings state that we should have devotion to the guru, the guru has many meanings. We view the outer guru as the dharmakāya, they provide the instructions to recognize the inner guru, the nature of our own minds. The goal of a good guru is to make you independent, not dependent on them. They give the instructions you need to traverse the path successfully. Any guru who is trying to make you dependent upon them is a teacher to be weary of."

"By his fifteenth year one burning question became the core around which his spiritual strivings revolved: "If, as the sutras say, our Essential-nature is Bodhi (perfection), why did all Buddhas have to strive for enlightenment and perfection?" His dissatisfaction with the answers he received at Mount Hiei led him eventually to Eisai-zenji, who had brought the teachings of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism from China to Japan. Eisai's reply to Dogen's question was: "No Buddha is conscious of its existence [that is, of this Essential-nature], while cats and oxen [that is the grossly deluded] are aware of it." In other words, Buddhas, precisely because they are Buddhas, no longer think of having or not having a Perfect-nature; only the deluded think in such terms. At these words Dogen had an inner realization which dissolved his deep-seated doubt."-- Yasutani-roshi's Introductory Lectures on Zen Training

Also see: Original Enlightenment and Original Nature is a wrong view / How did Ignorance originate etc

There is a conversation with John Tan and Soh where John refuted notions of a perfect nature in 2007 and 2009: No Buddha is Conscious of its Existence [of having a Perfect-nature]

"Spontaneous arising cannot be taught first. You cannot tell people things just happen by itself. You cannot tell people to practise this way. Only after certain stage, when a person has seen non-duality, experienced the luminosity, experienced the passing and dissolving away, you can tell them. Because it is leading towards that already. But before that, if you tell them, they are being controlled by the momentum, merely swapped away only. It is very dangerous to tell people to just relax. Why does a person say that? Because they failed to see the strength of what I call, pre-consciousness, the strength of propensities. You see what I mean? When you tell or teach a person "just relax lah, just let everything manifest." You can't. A person that does this probably turns to being ultimate slacker. Didn't do anything. {laugh}

Rather than practising, he is digging his own grave you know, enhancing the momentum. Why spontaneous arising is for a person that is understood (reality)... especially that he has gone through non-duality. He can "do" spontaneous arising. He can practise spontaneous arising. Why is this so? Because once a person enters into non-duality, the bond of the Self is already gone. A big chunk of the bond, the Self-propensities are already gone. And when this self propensities is gone, the energy turning against itself is being released, and work for itself. It does not die, you know. It is just released and then works for itself, rather than turning against itself. So only a person that has understood and experienced non-duality, it is better for him to penetrate spontaneous arising, to practice this way. Because can see.. {inaudible} there is no need to respond anything. Do you get what I mean? But if let's say you do not see it, like I said that everything is the Mind, but you did not see that everything is the Mind then you start to say "don't need to do anything", you are letting your momentum take [over]..." - John Tan, 2007, Transcript of Lankavatara Sutra with Thusness 2007

It is very common and easy for someone without the realizations to mimic the expressions of naturalness and spontaneity, but such mimicry is never the real thing but a fabricated version that is ironically not 'natural'. **It's absolutely useless to "try" to "be spontaneous" and mimic the zen expressions of spontaneity and naturalness without giving rise to the proper experiential insights, kensho, and satori.** It is important to understand that mimicry will not get you there, just like trying to mimic or train a state of being emotionless is not the same as overcoming the emotional afflictions (see next chapter), for the insights and actualization and causal conditions for such a liberation are not addressed. This is why we have to focus on emphasizing on the causes - the insights and wisdom that leads to "naturalness", "spontaneous perfection", "freedom from emotional afflictions" rather than mimic the states and deceive ourselves, thinking we are getting there where in fact we are simply training a pretense-state, a contrived state.

"as to buddhadharma, no effort is necessary. You have only to be ordinary, with nothing to do—defecating, urinating, wearing clothes, eating food, and lying down when tired."
(Record of Linji, tr Sasaki, p 11-12)

'I neither desire heavenly realms,
Nor want blessings in this world.

When hungry, eat;
Tired, sleep.
Fools laugh at me,
But the wise know its wisdom.
It's not being stupid –
It's what we originally are.'
(Enjoying the Way by Nanyue Mingzan, aka Lazy Zan)

'You get up in the morning, dress, wash your face, and so on; you call these miscellaneous thoughts, but all that is necessary is that there be no perceiver or perceived when you perceive—no hearer or heard when you hear, no thinker or thought when you think. Buddhism is very easy and very economical; it spares effort, but you yourself waste energy and make your own hardships.'
(Foyan Qingyuan, in Instant Zen, p 70)

"Yes Zen is about ordinary experience, yet you must understand what is meant by ordinary mind. :) The ordinary mind is the mind of anatta. If we pretend to be ordinary and try to 'look' for expression of ordinariness then we are deluded. If we fail to realize that true ordinariness comes from the realization of anatta and mistaken the finger for the moon, we are deluded. Without the insight of anatta, how could we ever understand the essence of being natural, effortless and ordinary? This is what Buddhism meant by ordinary.

Yet I have seen people going after 'ordinariness', trying to be 'nothing special', attempting to look for expression of ordinariness. That is why for (Soh: I believe he meant certain misguided/deluded) zen practitioners, they will not understand the seven phases of experience. They are caught up by 'forms', by the stages of the ox herding and missed the insight. :)

Unless practitioners realize clearly how these insights lead to the ordinary and natural state, there is no meaning in looking for 'sweep floor and washing dishes' or 'chop wood carry water'. This is the next disease of Zen. These practitioners are actively looking for such expressions. They do not have the wisdom to discern. What you have to awaken is the insights into our empty yet luminous nature, then talk about ordinariness and the natural state. That is why I told you, don't talk about natural state or spontaneous arising. However people just like to talk about that. Once you realized anatta, ordinariness and the natural state mean something very different. You can breathe hard, you can breathe soft, yet both are considered natural and ordinary. You can take a deep breath or short breath, still as non-dual, natural and ordinary. Sincere practitioners can take many years to come to this natural state even after the initial glimpse of insight of anatta."
- John Tan, 2009

Vipassana, John Tan's Style

Thusness, 2005~2007:

Ck: John, how to practise vipassana in daily life?

Thusness: Just observe every sensation, until one day you are able to experience "emptiness as form". Then it becomes effortless. Truthz you cannot imagine the bliss when one clearly experiences that. But there is no point to over stress anything.

Ck: Thusness, just observe every sensation... give me an example?

Thusness: When you breath, you don't have to care about what is the right way of breathing, whether you breath hard or soft, smooth or fine...just experience as much clarity as you can...just that experience...regardless of what it is like. Same for all other experiences.

Ck: What about sound? How is it?

Thusness: When you hear, just the sound...the totality of the sound. There is no how but just to do away with all arbitrary thoughts. Hear the sound as clear as you can.

Ck: Then what about thoughts? Thoughts are very sticky.

Thusness: Thoughts seldom arise if the practice is correct. If it arises, then not to chase after its meaning. Not to answer yourself what it means, not to dwell on 'what'...then you will resort to just the moment of awareness.

Ck: When I try to be just openly aware, I notice that I jump from sense to sense. Like one moment hearing, then touch, etc.

Thusness: That is ok. Our nature is so.

Ck: What's the right way to do it?

Thusness: Don't think that you should concentrate. Your only duty is to sense with as much clarity as possible.

Ck: And for all the sensations, I don't dwell in the 'what'?

Thusness: Your mind is looking for a way, a method. But what that is needed is only the clarity. However because our mind is so molded and affected by our habitual propensities, it becomes difficult what that is direct and simple. Just stop asking 'how', 'what', 'why'. And submerge into the moment. And experience. I prefer you to describe. Not to ask how, what, why, when, where and who. Only this is necessary.

Ck: Ok.

Thusness: If you practise immediately, you will understand. If you entertain who, what, where, when and how, you create more propensities and dull your own luminosity.

Ck: By the way, I shuffle self-inquiry, observing sensations and thoughts, being aware... It's ok, right?

Thusness: Yes.

Ck: Means start work i'll have even more propensities...

Thusness: That is when you do not understand what awareness is, but it is true to a certain extent.

.....

(10:07 PM) Thusness: tell me what you think is awareness? in your own words
(10:07 PM) Thusness: just say
(10:08 PM) AEN: just the knowingness, the sensation or thoughts etc
(10:09 PM) Thusness: look at the skin of your hands
(10:09 PM) AEN: ok
(10:09 PM) Thusness: looks real?
(10:09 PM) AEN: yea
(10:09 PM) Thusness: touch it... feel it as much as you can
(10:10 PM) Thusness: can you don't think of a background
(10:10 PM) AEN: yea
(10:10 PM) Thusness: and know that, that is awareness?
(10:10 PM) AEN: ya
(10:10 PM) Thusness: that is all.

.....

[22:37] <^john^> so far what do you understand about awareness?
[22:38] hmm like you say lor... awareness is never lost
[22:39] <^john^> what is awareness right now? when you say thought arises, is thought awareness?
[22:41] Soh: thought is not awareness, but there is awareness of thought
[22:41] <^john^> so what is thought? and where is awareness? same like taste, is the taste awareness?
[22:45] Soh: i think you cant define awareness to a 'thing' Razz
[22:45] <^john^> so is taste or thought a thing? :) you practice meditation now right? :)
[22:47] Soh: never practise for quite some time. taste or thought is not a thing
[22:49] <^john^> so do you think awareness is a party behind thinking thought or experiencing taste? :) lol
[22:49] Soh: no
[22:49] <^john^> taste is not a thing, then what is it?
[22:50] Soh: just the awareness
[22:50] <^john^> experience this awareness with totality. :)

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(12:21 AM) Thusness: what is the role of insight meditation? why bare attention? why naked awareness? when insight meditation is taught and buddha said when hearing jsut the sound...this and that... what buddha wanted is to experience directly what awareness is, the arising, the ceasing, the clarity, the non-dual nature. in DO
(12:24 AM) AEN_____: icic..

(12:24 AM) Thusness: not to note it with thought or place any conclusion on any experience. "this is impermanence" is not about noting and place any conclusion about an phenomenon arising. but experience impermanence directly, not in words
(12:26 AM) AEN_____: icic.. yea
(12:26 AM) Thusness: be impermanence and know what is it really... see what clarity is, not what it should be. it is luminous and yet empty...experience it directly...it is so.
(12:27 AM) AEN_____: icic..
(12:27 AM) Thusness: break the solidity until there is no holding simply thus. don't watch...there is no watcher...there is just momentary manifestation and that is already luminosity and emptiness
(12:31 AM) AEN: but in conventional saying we say often say watching
(12:31 AM) AEN: easier to understand
(12:31 AM) Thusness: yeah but i am not talking about conventional or ultimate. if it is just a form of expression there is nothing wrong with it. but the fact is we are really experiencing it as if there is a watcher...that is the problem.

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2007:
(10:03 PM) Thusness: lately i have been experiencing more vividly "Emptiness as form". insight meditation (vipassana) like what buddha taught is very important. when seeing, just the seen. when hearing, just the heard
(10:04 PM) AEN: oic isn't this non duality
(10:04 PM) Thusness: yeah... but the depth of clarity. it is difficult for me to tell you. just train yourself into that.. if you didn't, your life will be wasted. even with all the things i tell you. :) after non duality, you must experience until at least this level, "Emptiness as form"
(10:06 PM) AEN: btw emptiness as form is not form as emptiness? it's like the dharma dan heart sutra model
(10:06 PM) AEN: first is form as form, then emptiness is emptiness, then form is emptiness, then emptiness is form ?
(10:06 PM) Thusness: just the manifestation until tremendous clarity.
(10:06 PM) Thusness: no need... just non-dual and the depth of non-duality

"14/06/2006

Reply part 1:

Is Absorption not aware of other things? This is difficult to say. Although many articles and books about mindfulness seem to suggest that it is so, this is not necessarily true when we progress towards the more subtle experience. Clarity can come a time where it is so clear that it is an absorption, it is a sort of Insight-Absorption but It is different from absorption derived from concentration. It is clarity absorption where it touches the heart of 'things', that is itself. For example being taste itself, it is absorbed yet completely clear. This is truly blissful and beyond description. I have not come across any book touching this yet and I hope Toni's new book can write something about it. :)

Reply part 2:

The AMness can be said to be a form of absorption where the object of concentration is the Self. It can be a question "Who am I" that leads one to the experience of the subject-object becoming one. Till a point the practitioner simply experiences a pure sense of existence. However such mode of experience has no understanding of its luminous clarity and its nature as anatta. The key point about mindful awareness is there is no keeping of the mind on anything and by not resting on anything, it fuses into everything; therefore it cannot be concentrated; rather it is to relax into nothingness empty of self, empty of any artificial doing so that the natural luminosity can take its own course. There is no focusing, there is only allowing the mirror bright clarity to shine with it natural radiance. In essence there is no one there, only the phenomenon arising and ceasing telling their stories." - John Tan, 2006

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2007:

(10:50 PM) Thusness:
at the more refine level of non dual experience, when the sense of self is gone to a great level, there is absolutely nothing but only everything...what does that mean? many though said so but is still not there even he is already at the level of non dual.
(10:51 PM) AEN:
not where?
(10:51 PM) Thusness:
he must feel completely nothing and only the 'concreteness', 'solidness', realness... must feel the 'solidness' and that is things.... that is awareness
(10:51 PM) AEN:
Oic. Thusness says:
many though said so but is still not there even he is already at the level of non dual. --> huh not where?
(10:52 PM) Thusness:
there are different level of non-dual experience. feeling crystal clarity and 'no one there' is the same as only the solidness, hardness, sound, vividness, realness. that 'sense of self' must be completely gone. :) you must remember this.
(10:55 PM) AEN:
oic.. this is like mindfulness rite
(10:56 PM) Thusness:
so now you know why buddha teach mindfulness? and why advaita din. :) this is important. it is the direct way. you c, the teaching and the practice is in line.
(10:57 PM) AEN:
oic..
(10:57 PM) Thusness:
so non-dual as in no-self. into impermanence and just the manifestation and DO and authenticate this with insight meditation. however it is taught wrongly. :P
(10:58 PM) AEN:
icic

(10:58 PM) Thusness:
but when one experience deeper and understand better, why buddha taught and said those things will become clear. you will realise that advaita always tok about the Self. but when a person tat is enlightened, he doesn't like to use this word. Self is a by-product. it is the production of thought.

(11:00 PM) Thusness:
even if you call it Brahman, it is still sinking back to a source. but when one gets clearer and clearer, and know more about manifestation. there is only arising and ceasing of phenomenon according to conditions. that is dharmakaya. it is understood in crystal clarity.

(11:02 PM) Thusness:
just understand that there is no self until it sinks to the inmost consciousness. and know the different layers of consciousness but do not think that it is different type of consciousness

Session Start: Monday, April 13, 2009

(8:54 PM) AEN: s4bnw: Let's do some inference. The direct path provides a direct way of realising our buddha nature, which is in effect, directly helping one to progress faster, spiritually-wise compared to those who take the gradual path, which means they take more time and more round-about way to see buddha nature, isn't it?
(9:44 PM) Thusness: yes
(9:45 PM) Thusness: in general yes. it also depends on a practitioner dedication. Buddha said b4 if one can be fully vipassanic for 7 days, one can reach full enlightenment right? if a person can have that sort of crystal clarity like "I AMness" in all arising sensations for day and night 7 days, I believe he will reach enlightenment
(9:48 PM) AEN: oic..
(9:50 PM) Thusness: like I hear sound, till it becomes "I AMness", crystal clarity...till it burns away all labels, all divisions, just crystal clear SOUND. If all whatever arises can have that sort of clarity, pristineness, then I can't imagine...if the concentration is that great. :)
(9:51 PM) Thusness: actually it is crystal clarity and effortlessness. to me it can only be done when a practitioner already penetrate the deepest nature of non dual awareness. That is why he knows why and how deep within him.
(9:52 PM) Thusness: it is this non-dual clarity
(9:52 PM) AEN: icic..
(9:55 PM) AEN: btw then gradual path is what
You mean what you said is direct path?
(9:55 PM) Thusness: gradual
then it is the same. like do vipassana till one is able to do that.
(9:55 PM) AEN: oic..
(9:56 PM) Thusness: realisation is only one knows the how and why... but that is already quite a deep realisation
(9:56 PM) Thusness: after stabilizing non-dual then one knows why
why buddha taught vipassana. that crystal clear mirror presence yet empty.
(9:58 PM) AEN: icic..

(10:00 PM) Thusness: actually if we can have the fullest and effortless experience of this non-dual mirror presence, then nothing matters. whether DO or Brahman, it is the same.
(10:01 PM) AEN: wat do you mean
(10:02 PM) Thusness: means at the greatest clarity and completely effortless experience of our non-dual mirror presence, there is no difference. at that point, there are no concepts, labelling, self, views... it is just complete oneness and reality. so no difference
(10:03 PM) AEN: but non dual is not yet emptiness insight rite
(10:03 PM) Thusness: emptiness or DO are also raft... if one can completely dissolve the last trace without any views, then there is no difference. just simply naked awareness, that is sufficient. however we don't know what is naked awareness. we have only a very very vague idea of what non-dual awareness is.

For those that experience Eternal Witness, they thought they know...but in truth, only a glimpse... therefore one undergo non-dual, anatta, emptiness and then spontaneous perfection. if we can fully experience non-dual mirror like Awareness in full effortlessness, then we have to be empty, centerless and traceless. otherwise there is no true effortlessness and spontaneity. most likely it will be a contrived experience
(10:07 PM) AEN: u mean through concentration?
(10:08 PM) Thusness: without understanding of DO and emptiness. because our existing dualistic and inherent views is the cause of that contrivance
(10:10 PM) AEN: oic..
(10:17 PM) Thusness: what s4bnw said is quite true. don't argue for nothing. direct path is not for everyone and you have not face the problem yet.

.....

"It is extremely difficult to express what is 'Isness'. Isness is awareness as forms. It is a pure sense of presence yet encompassing the 'transparent concreteness' of forms. There is a crystal clear sensations of awareness manifesting as the manifold of phenomenal existence. If we are vague in the experiencing of this 'transparent concreteness' of Isness, it is always due to that 'sense of self' creating the sense of division... ...you must stress the 'form' part of awareness. It is the 'forms', it is the 'things'." - John Tan, 2007

....

Someone asked, "A quick question about Thusness Vipassanaa.

It's about clarity right?

Like when I focus on sound, I can see that mind sort of created a visual to describe sound and "color" it, but even without the mind there is clear knowing. The sound without mind's coloring is borderless."

Soh replied:

You must experience the intensity of luminosity:

"Good insight. Stability of experience has a predictable relationship with the unfolding and deepening of insights. For example how seamless and effortless can non-dual experience be, if in the back of one's mind, subtle views of duality and inherency and tendencies continue to surface and affect our moment to moment experience - for example conjuring an unchanging source or mind that results in a perpetual tendency to sink back and referencing experience back to a source.

For example even after it is seen that everything is a manifestation of awareness or mind, there might still be subtle tendencies to reference back to a source, awareness or mind and therefore the transience is not appreciated in full. Nondual is experienced but one sinks back into substantial nonduality - there is always a referencing back to a base, an "awareness" that is nevertheless inseparable from all phenomena.

If one arises the insight that our ideas of an unchanging source, awareness or mind is just another thought - that there is simply thought after thought, sight after sight, sound after sound, and there isn't an inherent or unchanging "awareness", "mind", "source". Non-dual becomes implicit and effortless when there is the realisation that what awareness, seeing, hearing really is, is just the seen... The heard... The transience... The transience itself rolls and knows, no knower or other "awareness" can be found. Like there is no river apart from flowing, no wind apart from blowing, each noun implies its verb... Similarly awareness is simply the process of knowing not separated from the known. Scenery sees, music hears. Because there is nothing unchanging, independent, ultimate apart from the transience, there is no more sinking back to a source and instead there is full comfort resting as the transience itself.

Lastly do continue practicing the intensity of luminosity... When looking at tennis ball just sense the tennis ball fully.... Without thinking of a source, background, observer, self. Just the tennis ball as a luminous light. When breathing... Just the breathe... When seeing scenery, just sights, shapes and colours - intensely luminous and vivid without an agent or observer. When hearing music... Sound of bird chirping, the crickets... Just that - chirp chirp. A zen master noted upon his awakening... When I am hearing the bell ringing, there is no I and no bell... Just the ringing. The direct experiencing of no-mind and intensity of luminosity.. This is the purpose of the practice of the four foundations of mindfulness that is taught by the Buddha." - Soh, 2011

And you must give rise to insight of anatta: Vipassana Must Go With Luminous Manifestation

Therefore contemplating on the two stanzas of anatta (see: On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection) and bahiya sutta (see: The Buddha on Non-Duality) is important as part of vipassana contemplation to guide the mind to penetrate view of self/Self and realise anatta"

Here's a very good video on Vipassana by the dharma teacher Daniel M. Ingram that John Tan and I likes: https://vimeo.com/250616410

It should be understood that as John Tan pointed out, Vipassana needs to go hand in hand with luminous manifestation otherwise it becomes merely a mindful reminder but Vipassana is about direct insight: Vipassana Must Go With Luminous Manifestation

Mindfulness of Breathing (Anapanasati)

Anapanasati is a wonderful practice taught by Buddha which I (Soh) practices regularly. I consider anapanasati my favourite practice. The Buddha taught anapanasati as a potent means to enlightenment, and the Buddha continued to practice anapanasati regularly even after his enlightenment.

Winston asked: "Is there a diff in how you practice anapanasati compared to standard practice?"

Soh: "Not much difference. But with anatta all sensations are felt directly and gaplessly as an actualization of anatta.

The eye of directness is not open prior to anatta.

...

Actually there is a difference. In the past I focused more on nose tips but now the center of attention is the abdominal area. I try to push my energy down (like Vase Breathing). Then the breathing becomes a whole body awareness with some grounding in the abdominal area.

In all other aspects its still similar - sensitive to rapture, letting go, tranquilizing mind and body, etc etc"

One should practice Mindfulness of Breathing with the taste of anatta (no-self) and total exertion, one's breathing is the total exertion of whole body-mind-universe:

"https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../contemplatingobser...

http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_5befored23f60102e2y3.html

观呼吸 (Contemplating/observing breathing)

(2012-08-02 11:00:07)

智者坐在那里观呼吸，

他不说“我在呼吸”、“我在呼吸”.....

那样是在强化一个虚幻的、不存在的“我”！

也不符合事实真相。

The Wise One sits there contemplating/observing breathing,

He does not say "I am breathing", "I am breathing"....

That would be solidifying a delusional, non-existent "self"!

And it does not match with the truth of things.

“呼——吸”、“呼——吸”.....

他观察到，其中没有呼吸的人、也没有被呼吸的人。

呼吸在进行，就像天地起落的风；

就像风来回在一片柳叶之旁。

"Breathe in ------- Breathe out", "Breathe in ------- Breathe out"...

He notices that, in it there is no person who is breathing, and there is no person who is being-breathed.

Breathing is on-going, like the wind rising and falling in the sky and earth (world).

It is just like wind going back and forth at the side of a willow leaf.

在呼吸之中，

没有一个独立的造作者，也不存在一个承受造作的人。

是胸，是肺，是骨，是髓，是血，是肉，

是心、是念.....，是诸缘造成了呼吸！

In the midst of breathing,

There is no independent doer, there does not exist a person who is the feeler of action.

It is the chest, it is the lungs, it is the bones, it is the marrow, it is the blood, it is the flesh,

it is the mind, it is the thought...., it is various conditions that is causing breathing!

当他长吸气，他了了分明他在长吸气，

但他不认为是他在吸气，

是他在吸气的诸缘中，又加入了一个“我作长吸气”的念，

于是长吸气发生。

When he is breathing in long, he clearly comprehends that he is breathing in long,

but he does not reckon that it is he who is breathing in,

Rather it is that within the various conditions of his breathing in, one imputes another layer of thought "I am doing the breathing in long"

Therefore breathing-in long happens.

当他长呼气，他了了分明他在长呼气，

但他不认为是他在呼气，

是他在呼气的诸缘中，又加入了一个“我作长呼气”的念，

于是长呼气发生。

When he is breathing out long, he clearly comprehends that he is breathing out long,

But he does not reckon that it is he who is breathing out,

Rather it is that within the various conditions of his breathing out, he imputed another layer of thought "I am doing the breathing out long"

Therefore breathing-out long happens.

当他短吸气，他了了分明他在短吸气，

但他不认为是他在吸气，

是他在吸气的诸缘中，又加入了一个“我作短吸气”的念，

于是短吸气发生。

When he is breathing in short, he clearly comprehends that he is breathing in short,

But he does not reckon that it is he who is breathing in,

Rather it is that within the various conditions of his breathing in, he imputed another layer of thought "I am doing the breathing in short"

Therefore breathing-in short happens.

当他短呼气，他了了分明他在短呼气，

但他不认为是他在呼气，

是他在呼气的诸缘中，又加入了一个“我作短呼气”的念，

于是短呼气发生。

When he is breathing out short, he clearly comprehends that he is breathing out short,

But he does not reckon that it is he who is breathing out,

Rather it is that within the various conditions of his breathing out, he imputed another layer of thought "I am doing the breathing out short"

Therefore breathing-out short happens.

深观呼吸者，归依风界；

深观呼吸者，了见诸法无我！

深观呼吸者，看见了因缘法；

因看见了因缘法，他看见了如来！

Deeply contemplating the breather, returning and relying/taking refuge in the element of wind/air;

Deeply contemplating the breather, seeing with insight that all dharmas are without self!

Deeply contemplating the breather, seeing the dharma of dependent origination;

Because of seeing the dharma of dependent origination, he sees the Thus Come One [Buddha]!

如观呼吸一样，

智者观想“受、想、行、识”——

于诸受中，智人不见造作者，不见承受者；

于“想、行、识”中，也是这样。

Just like contemplating/observing the breathing,

The Wise One contemplates "feelings, perception, volition and consciousness" ----

And within all feelings, The Wise One does not conceive of a doer, does not conceive of a feeler;

And within "perception, volition and consciousness", it is also likewise.

观呼吸，可以入法界；

智者深观一切法，皆能通达诸法实相，见证如来！

呼吸是个入口，

一切色、受、想、行、识，皆是入口。

By contemplating/observing breathing, it is possible to enter the Dharmadhatu;

The Wise One deeply contemplates/observes all dharmas, thereby could understand the reality of all dharmas, and witness the Thus Come One [Buddha]!

Breathing is an entry-point,

All forms, feelings, perceptions, volition, and consciousness are all entry points.

智者坐在那里观呼吸，

他观见虚空藏菩萨，观见风神，

观见三世一切如来，

呼——吸、呼——吸，他就像天地。

The Wise One sits there contemplating/observing breathing,

He perceives the Ākāśagarbha bodhisattva (bodhisattva of boundless space treasury), perceives the god of the wind,

perceives all the Thus Come Ones [Buddhas] of the three times,

Breathe in --------- Breathe out. Breathe in --------- Breathe out. He is just like heaven and earth."

The Buddha's teaching on Mindfulness of Breathing:

Majjhima Nikāya 118

Introductory Section

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatthī in the Eastern Park, in the Palace of Migāra's Mother, together with many very well known elder disciples—the venerable Sāriputta, the venerable Mahā Moggallāna, the venerable Mahā Kassapa, the venerable Mahā Kaccāna, the venerable Mahā Koṭṭhita, the venerable Mahā Kappina, the venerable Mahā Cunda, the venerable Anuruddha, the venerable Revata, the venerable Ānanda, and other very well known elder disciples.

Now on that occasion elder bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing new bhikkhus; some elder bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing ten bhikkhus, some elder bhikkhus had been teaching and instructing twenty...thirty...forty bhikkhus. And the new bhikkhus, taught and instructed by the elder bhikkhus, had achieved successive stages of high distinction.

On that occasion—the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, on the full-moon night of the Pavāraṇā ceremony—the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the Sangha of bhikkhus. Then, surveying the silent Sangha of bhikkhus, he addressed them thus:

"Bhikkhus, I am content with this progress. My mind is content with this progress. So arouse still more energy to attain the unattained, to achieve the unachieved, to realise the unrealised. I shall wait here at Sāvatthī for the Komudī full moon of the fourth month."

The bhikkhus of the countryside heard: "The Blessed One will wait there at Sāvatthī for the Komudī full moon of the fourth month." And the bhikkhus of the countryside left in due course for Sāvatthī to see the Blessed One.

And elder bhikkhus still more intensively taught and instructed new bhikkhus; some elder bhikkhus taught and instructed ten bhikkhus, some elder bhikkhus taught and instructed twenty...thirty...forty bhikkhus. And the new bhikkhus, taught and instructed by the elder bhikkhus, achieved successive stages of high distinction.

On that occasion—the Uposatha day of the fifteenth, the full-moon night of the Komudī full moon of the fourth month—the Blessed One was seated in the open surrounded by the Sangha of bhikkhus. Then, surveying the silent Sangha of bhikkhus, he addressed them thus:

"Bhikkhus, this assembly is free from prattle, this assembly is free from chatter. It consists purely of heartwood. Such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, an incomparable field of merit for the world—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly that a small gift given to it becomes great and a great gift greater—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as is rare for the world to see—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly. Such an assembly as would be worth journeying many leagues with a travel-bag to see—such is this Sangha of bhikkhus, such is this assembly.

"In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who are arahants with taints destroyed, who have lived the holy life, done what had to be done, laid down the burden, reached their own goal, destroyed the fetters of being, and are completely liberated through final knowledge—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.

"In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who, with the destruction of the five lower fetters, are due to reappear spontaneously in the Pure Abodes and there attain final Nibbāna, without ever returning from that world—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.

"In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who, with the destruction of three fetters and with the attenuation of lust, hate, and delusion, are once-returners, returning once to this world to make an end of suffering—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.

"In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who, with the destruction of the three fetters, are stream-enterers, no longer subject to perdition, bound for deliverance, headed for enlightenment—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.

"In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of the four foundations of mindfulness—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus. In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of the four right kinds of striving...of the four bases for spiritual power...of the five faculties...of the five powers...of the seven enlightenment factors...of the Noble Eightfold Path—such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus.

"In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of loving-kindness ...of compassion...of altruistic joy...of equanimity...of the meditation on foulness...of the perception of impermanence—

such bhikkhus are there in this Sangha of bhikkhus. In this Sangha of bhikkhus there are bhikkhus who abide devoted to the development of mindfulness of breathing.

Mindfulness of Breathing

"Bhikkhus, when mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it is of great fruit and great benefit. When mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, it fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness. When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfil the seven enlightenment factors. When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated, they fulfil true knowledge and deliverance.

"And how, bhikkhus, is mindfulness of breathing developed and cultivated, so that it is of great fruit and great benefit?

"Here a bhikkhu, gone to the forest or to the root of a tree or to an empty hut, sits down; having folded his legs crosswise, set his body erect, and established mindfulness in front of him, ever mindful he breathes in, mindful he breathes out.

"Breathing in long, he understands: 'I breathe in long'; or breathing out long, he understands: 'I breathe out long.' Breathing in short, he understands: 'I breathe in short'; or breathing out short, he understands: 'I breathe out short.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body of breath'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body of breath.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquillising the bodily formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquillising the bodily formation.'

"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing rapture'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing rapture.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation. ' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in tranquillising the mental formation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out tranquillising the mental formation.'

"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in experiencing the mind'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out experiencing the mind.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in gladdening the mind'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out gladdening the mind.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in concentrating the mind'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out concentrating the mind.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in liberating the mind'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out liberating the mind.'

"He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence. ' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating fading away'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating fading away.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating cessation'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating cessation.' He trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment'; he trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating relinquishment. '

“Bhikkhus, that is how mindfulness of breathing is developed and cultivated, so that it is of great fruit and great benefit.

Fulfilment of the Four Foundations of Mindfulness

“And how, bhikkhus, does mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfil the four foundations of mindfulness?

“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu, breathing in long, understands: ‘I breathe in long,’ or breathing out long, understands: ‘I breathe out long’; breathing in short, understands: ‘I breathe in short,’ or breathing out short, understands: ‘I breathe out short’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the whole body of breath’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the whole body of breath’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in tranquillising the bodily formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillising the bodily formation’—on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I say that this is a certain body among the bodies, namely, in-breathing and out-breathing. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing rapture’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing rapture’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing pleasure’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing pleasure’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the mental formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the mental formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in tranquillising the mental formation’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out tranquillising the mental formation’—on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I say that this is a certain feeling among the feelings, namely, giving close attention to in-breathing and out-breathing. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in experiencing the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out experiencing the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in gladdening the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out gladdening the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in concentrating the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out concentrating the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in liberating the mind’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out liberating the mind’—on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. I do not say that there is the development of mindfulness of breathing for one who is forgetful, who is not fully aware. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating impermanence’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating impermanence’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating fading away’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe out contemplating fading away’; trains thus: ‘I shall breathe in contemplating cessation’; trains

thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating cessation'; trains thus: 'I shall breathe in contemplating relinquishment'; trains thus: 'I shall breathe out contemplating relinquishment'—on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world. Having seen with wisdom the abandoning of covetousness and grief, he closely looks on with equanimity. That is why on that occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world.

"Bhikkhus, that is how mindfulness of breathing, developed and cultivated, fulfils the four foundations of mindfulness.

Fulfilment of the Seven Enlightenment Factors

"And how, bhikkhus, do the four foundations of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfil the seven enlightenment factors?

"Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating the body as a body, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world—on that occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in him. On whatever occasion unremitting mindfulness is established in a bhikkhu—on that occasion the mindfulness enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development, it comes to fulfilment in him.

"Abiding thus mindful, he investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it. On whatever occasion, abiding thus mindful, a bhikkhu investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it—on that occasion the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

"In one who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it, tireless energy is aroused. On whatever occasion tireless energy is aroused in a bhikkhu who investigates and examines that state with wisdom and embarks upon a full inquiry into it—on that occasion the energy enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

"In one who has aroused energy, unworldly rapture arises. On whatever occasion unworldly rapture arises in a bhikkhu who has aroused energy— on that occasion the rapture enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

"In one who is rapturous, the body and the mind become tranquil. On whatever occasion the body and the mind become tranquil in a bhikkhu who is rapturous—on that occasion the tranquillity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

"In one whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure, the mind becomes concentrated. On whatever occasion the mind becomes concentrated in a bhikkhu whose body is tranquil and who feels pleasure—on that occasion the

concentration enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

“He closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated. On whatever occasion a bhikkhu closely looks on with equanimity at the mind thus concentrated—on that occasion the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating feelings as feelings, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world…repeat as at §§30–36…the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind as mind, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world…repeat as at §§30–36…the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

“Bhikkhus, on whatever occasion a bhikkhu abides contemplating mind-objects as mind-objects, ardent, fully aware, and mindful, having put away covetousness and grief for the world…repeat as at §§30–36……the equanimity enlightenment factor is aroused in him, and he develops it, and by development it comes to fulfilment in him.

“Bhikkhus, that is how the four foundations of mindfulness, developed and cultivated, fulfil the seven enlightenment factors.

Fulfilment of True Knowledge and Deliverance

“And how, bhikkhus, do the seven enlightenment factors, developed and cultivated, fulfil true knowledge and deliverance?

“Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu develops the mindfulness enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment. He develops the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor…the energy enlightenment factor…the rapture enlightenment factor…the tranquillity enlightenment factor…the concentration enlightenment factor…the equanimity enlightenment factor, which is supported by seclusion, dispassion, and cessation, and ripens in relinquishment.

“Bhikkhus, that is how the seven enlightenment factors, developed and cultivated, fulfil true knowledge and deliverance.”

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

Common Issues in Meditation

Inner Chatter

"This is why I said earlier that meditation has to work, because it inherently obeys and works on these same rules of nature that everything else works on. **When we sit and do meditation practice we focus the mind on an object, typically the breath.** In doing this we remove the conditions that support the perpetuation of inner chatter. It's like the flower suddenly not getting water any more, over time it slowly dies. Our inner chatter is the same. Don't think thought that just because you've removed the conditions through meditation that the chatter will cease straight away. If we stop drinking water it takes a few days before we really start to feel it, and a week or two before we die. Our inner chatter is the same. In sitting meditation we aren't stopping thought, we are removing certain conditions that support the existence of problems in our lives. In doing this things naturally quieten down on their own and our life naturally feels more alive, more radiant and vibrant. So it's a constant process of letting go whatever house or structure you have around you at that point in time and letting it naturally pass. **Peace, happiness and silence therefore aren't things we acquire, this is why we can't go out and seek after them and acquire them, they are the natural properties of our existence when the noise of our lives quietens down.**

So if you want peace of mind, don't focus on getting peace. If you want happiness, don't focus on getting happiness. You have to focus on meditating diligently and letting go of the house you've build up around you. As the house decays and dies and collapses peace and happiness is revealed."

- Dean 'Jagaro' Crabb. Read the entire well-written article https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/10/quietening-inner-chatter.html

Lethargy/Sleepiness

"If your mind feels dull and sluggish, sit in a cooler place, splash water on your face, expel the stale breath and lift your gaze. Invigorate your attention with sharp alertness. If you still feel drowsy, refresh yourself by moving about." - Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, a great and highly recommended Mahamudra meditation manual

"If you are sleepy, you can try chanting the Oooommmmmm mantra slowly and many times. This will raise your vibrational and energy frequency and bring you to a state of wakeful and alert pure Presence. It can also be a doorway to Maha total exertion, where the chanting vibrates as the universe." - Soh, 2019

Buddha gave this teaching to Moggallana while he was still training to attain arahantship (he soon became an arahant and the foremost disciple of Buddha in psychic powers):

As he was sitting there, the Blessed One said to Ven. Mahā Moggallāna, "Are you nodding, Moggallāna? Are you nodding?"

"Yes, lord."

"Well then, Moggallāna, whatever perception you have in mind when drowsiness descends on you, don't attend to that perception, don't pursue it. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then recall to your awareness the Dhamma as you have heard & memorized it, re-examine it, & ponder it over in your mind. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then repeat aloud in detail the Dhamma as you have heard & memorized it. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then pull both your earlobes and rub your limbs with your hands. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then get up from your seat and, after washing your eyes out with water, look around in all directions and upward to the major stars & constellations. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then attend to the perception of light, resolve on the perception of daytime, (dwelling) by night as by day, and by day as by night. By means of an awareness thus open & unhampered, develop a brightened mind. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then—percipient of what lies in front & behind—set a distance to meditate walking back & forth, your senses inwardly immersed, your mind not straying outwards. It's possible that by doing this you will shake off your drowsiness.

"But if by doing this you don't shake off your drowsiness, then—reclining on your right side—take up the lion's posture, one foot placed on top of the other, mindful, alert, with your mind set on getting up. As soon as you wake up, get up quickly, with the thought, 'I won't stay indulging in the pleasure of lying down, the pleasure of reclining, the pleasure of drowsiness.' That is how you should train yourself.

Overcoming the Emotional Afflictions (aka. Kleshas, Samskaras, Vasanas)

"What is the use of a realization that fails to reduce your disturbing emotions?" ~ Padmasambhava/ Guru Rinpoche

"Whereas formerly he foolishly had greed—as well as desire & infatuation—he has now abandoned them, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Whereas formerly he foolishly had malice—as well as ill-will & hatred—he has now abandoned them.... Whereas formerly he foolishly had ignorance—as well as delusion & confusion—he has now abandoned them, their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. Thus a monk so endowed is endowed with the highest determination for calm, for this—the calming of passions, aversions, & delusions—is the highest noble calm. 'One should not be negligent of discernment, should guard the truth, be devoted to relinquishment, and train only for calm.' Thus it was said, and in reference to this was it said.

"'He has been stilled where the currents of supposition do not flow. And when the currents of supposition do not flow, he is said to be a sage at peace.' Thus it was said. With reference to what was it said? 'I am' is a supposition. 'I am this' is a supposition. 'I shall be' is a supposition. 'I shall not be'... 'I shall be possessed of form'... 'I shall not be possessed of form'... 'I shall be percipient'... 'I shall not be percipient'... 'I shall be neither percipient nor non-percipient' is a supposition. Supposition is a disease, supposition is a cancer, supposition is an arrow. By going beyond all supposition, he is called a sage at peace.

~ Buddha, Dhātu-vibhaṅga Sutta (MN 140)

On one occasion the Venerable Sariputta was dwelling in Magadha at Nalakagama. Then the wanderer Jambukhadaka approached the Venerable Sariputta and exchanged greetings with him. When they had concluded their greetings and cordial talk, he sat down to one side and said to the Venerable Sariputta:

"Friend Sariputta, it is said, 'Nibbana, Nibbana.' What now is Nibbana?"

"The destruction of lust, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion: this, friend, is called Nibbana.

"But, friend, is there a path, is there a way for the realization of this Nibbana?"

"There is a path, friend, there is a way for the realization of this Nibbana."

"And what, friend, is that path, what is that way for the realization of this Nibbana?"

"It is, friend, this Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. This is the path, friend, this is the way for the realization of this Nibbana."

"Excellent is the path, friend, excellent is the way for the realization of this Nibbana. And it is enough, friend Sariputta, for diligence."

SN 38:1; IV 251-52 - ***In The Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon Edited and introduced by Bhikkhu Bodhi](https://www.amazon.com/Buddhas-Words-Anthology-Discourses-Teachings/dp/0861714911). Page 364***

"Monks, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handle saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching" — Shakyamuni Buddha [4] - https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.021x.budd.html

https://suttacentral.net/an3.86/en/thanissaro

Based on the sutta above:

1) stream entry requires being 'wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment'
2) once returner requires 'wholly accomplished in virtue, moderately accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment'
3) non returner 'wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, and moderately accomplished in discernment'
4) 4th stage arahant 'wholly accomplished in virtue, wholly accomplished in concentration, wholly accomplished in discernment'

"No matter where you stay, be it a busy place or a solitary retreat, the only things that you need to conquer are your mind's five poisons, and your own true enemies, the eight worldly concerns - nothing else."

~ Chatral Rinpoche

"From the *Uprooting Delusion* tantra [Per Malcolm]:
"Because of a lack of mindful attention, self and other are grasped as a duality, and both outer and inner dependent origination occur. The whole universe arises through awareness looking externally. All sentient being arise through awareness looking internally. Through looking there, fearful appearances arise, through looking here, 'self' arises. Many mistakes arise from the single mistake about the appearances of here and there. Because of being mistaken about a self, there is a mistake about other, attachment to self, aversion to other. From the seed of attachment and aversion, the whole outer universe and inhabitants are mistakes."" – Kyle Dixon

(Five poisons: Ignorance, attachment, aversion, pride, jealousy.)

(Eight worldy concerns: Hope for happiness and fear of suffering. Hope for fame and fear of insignificance. Hope for praise and fear of blame. Hope for gain and fear of loss.)

"Though anatta is a seal *[Soh: i.e. a truth that is always already so, pertaining to the nature of mind/experience]*, it also requires one to arise the insight to feel liberated. When a practitioner realizes the anatta nature of manifestation, at that moment without the sense of observer, there is no negative emotions. There is only vivid sensation of all the arising as presence. When you are angry, it is a split. When you realized its anatta nature, there is just vivid clarity of all the bodily sensations. Even when there is an arising thought of something bad, it dissolves with no involvement in the content *[Soh: i.e. mental contents like stories, imagination and conceptualization along with emotional involvement]*. To be angry, a 'someone' must come into the content. When there is no involvement of the extra agent, there is only recoiling and self liberations. One should differentiate arising thought from the active involvement of the content a practitioner that realizes anatta is only involved fully in the vivid presence of the action, phenomena but not getting lost in content." - John Tan, 2009

Also see J Krishnamurti speaking on awareness without a background observer leads to never being angry again: https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=share&v=65uft-8u4gU

"Not creating an idea of a self frees us completely from anger. You cannot have anger unless there is a self. There is no boundless and omniscient self somewhere in the sky that created the whole universe, and there is no tangible and limited self that inhabits this bag of skin. All of reality is simply infinite dharmas that arise and disappear in accord with the laws of karma. There is not one thing standing against another." - Zen Master John Daido Loori

"I am only interested in the way to free from worries, fear, anger, greed and ignorance." - John Tan, 2018

"After realization of anatta, I have found that negative emotions dissolves or are attenuated." - Soh, 2018

I (Soh) had a further breakthrough in early 2019 that gave the impression that all emotional afflictions have been eliminated and perfection and purity and joy is experienced 24/7, however, John Tan warned about not coming to premature conclusions and gave the example of living in a condition of chronic pain. His point is that we never know what will happen in the future and how we might react, hence one should not make such claims even if one is confident, hence I avoid making claims. Now writing in late 2019 I can say the breakthrough has been sustained and has been deepening ever more, yet I am not inclined to make unnecessary claims. Furthermore I make no claims to finality as I see that my practice is still maturing. However, the reason I share what I share is because I feel that information should be open and people should know of what is possible in practice. Whereas in the earlier days of my practice I might have been slightly skeptical of 'complete freedom from emotional afflictions' being possible, I can speak with confidence now that it is possible. Even if one day I feel strong emotions arise again, that will still mean that 99.99% of my time has been spent in a state of perfection and purity free from suffering and emotional afflictions, which is still pretty good. It doesn't matter at all if you believe me or not and it's in fact quite healthy to keep some skepticism in my opinion (even I maintain skepticism for myself, this is why I always avoid making claims of finality like "I am forever free from emotional

afflictions", "I am fully enlightened", or whatever and instead if a thought of such ever arose it should follow with, "is it really true? hmm..."), but still it might be helpful for your own practice to keep an open mind to the possibilities about the infinite depths of spirituality. However, it is also important to know that my current state is not gotten through trying to eliminate emotions, it is just a side effect of my deepening state of awakening and maturation of wisdom and insight. You will **not** get to where I am by trying to suppress or stop emotions, so get your focus right in terms of practice - developing wisdom and meditative composure. In terms of practice, if emotions happen, it is much more helpful to integrate them with/as wisdom than to dissociate from them. One should have a gentle rather than negative attitude with emotions and practice complete openness with emotions, to feel its textures and forms in that moment with vivid clarity and realize its true nature as empty-clarity. I can say that I did not chase after freedom from emotional afflictions while practicing, and the clean state of purity after my breakthrough this year was more of a surprise.

"Actualizing anatta leads to fearlessness. (See: Fearless Samadhi - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/08/fearless-samadhi.html)" - Soh

"https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/2xuq7b/is_nirvana_basically_nonexistence/cp3k7c2/

Nirvana is simply the cessation of craving, aggression, and delusion. Delusion includes the construct of self, that I exist, that I am the perceiver or controller of experiences and actions. Nirvana is not annihilation because what ends is simply a process of delusional I-making and mine-making and other related mental afflictions, it is not the annihilation of some actual self (which never existed).

Nirvana is when, in seeing the seen, it's realized and experienced that there is simply that scenery, and no seer. No you in terms of that. In hearing sound, there's simply (always already) only sound, no hearer. In thinking... only thought, no thinker. When this is realized, not merely intellectualized, and directly experienced as being so, and all sense of self are being released, then that is Nirvana. This is peace, bliss, freedom from suffering. It is not boring: in fact, boredom only exist when there is a sense of self, and a sense of dissatisfaction with what is present, therefore a craving for something to be 'better than what is'. There is a subject and object here: 'I' want 'something better out there'. But when anatta is realized and actualized, there is no sense of self, there is no subject and object, no dichotomy of perceiver and perceived, and everything is just lucid and luminous and blissful and perfect as it is. Nirvana is also the cessation of craving.

(For more information check out Bahiya Sutta - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2008/01/ajahn-amaro-on-non-duality-and.html)

Also Buddha teaches that we have past lives and future lifetimes, but if you attain Nirvana, you are no longer stuck in this cycle of samsaric rebirth and suffering." - Soh, 2015

There are many misunderstandings of what Nirvana means, even among Buddhists. Read this article to get a good understanding of what Nirvana means: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/the-meaning-of-nirvana.html

"...This intense apperception has been ongoing in an unbroken way for a month or more, though there has been a gradual building up for months until a triggering event about a month back when I was contemplating on a PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) that made it go off the roof. The constant mode of heightened apperception seems to lessen or blocks out my ability to visualise and imagine. When closing eyes the state of consciousness is still apperception where only the vivid actuality of blackness is present along with whatever visual (non-imagined) colors imprinted due to lighting. Daydreaming seems gone or almost (if I relax I can still get a few wandering thoughts but that's it, I cannot really enter into a state of daydreaming) whereas I used to enjoy daydreaming especially when younger, yet I do not think I have 'no imagination capacity' (I can still get a faint semblance of an image I used to be able to conjure up with considerably more effort, it doesn't come as naturally or easily as before).

Dreams seems to have changed or is changing, I think I am dreaming less, with perhaps less visual content than before (I do not recall much visual contents, however I can't be sure if they completely lack that aspect). The last vivid dream with full on imagery was 1+ months back - I dreamt I was in a lift and that lift failed, I went into a free-fall from the 10th floor to the 1st and I thought I was going to die but I experienced 0 fear, anxiety, tenseness, emotions at all. Emotions now seem to have reduced a lot or changed and it is tempting at times to think "this is it, I'm free from affective emotions" but I still hesitate to make claims about being free from affective emotions as I think I will need more time to observe the changes - IMO the only way to get a good gauge of any changes is through time-testing in challenging conditions and utter sincerity (many have dropped claims later on, I would rather not make a claim to have them dropped later, making some claims to finality is not necessary to me). I am not too concerned whether I am there or I am not there, what matters more is the ongoing moment-to-moment actualization of freedom and peace, and if anything that hinders freedom arises, then they too can be investigated and dissolved or released with practice. And despite whatever breakthroughs we have in practice, life goes on - there are still so many things to be learnt and experienced in life, our new insights and state of consciousness continues to be integrated in various ways, and so on. It's not some be-all-end-all event in life that marks the end of any further developments down the road. If anything, perhaps it marks a new beginning in life, where life starts to be lived in an ever-fresh and pristine manner.

But the best thing in terms of affect so far is that the constant apperception is such a joyful, clean, pristine state of appreciating the boundless and radiant world that there isn't room for unpleasant emotions like sadness, boredom, depression, etc. There is certainly no more "Monday blues" or any kind of "blues" at all. It make sense now in my experience when Richard says his days are one perfect day after another. Even lying on bed, looking at the ceiling, the sound of the humming and background noises is joyful. Any added entertainment on top of that perfection is just another addition on top of perfection." - Soh, 2019

"Soh: the other day I was investigating fear.. then I saw how fear is tied to the sense of self that feels like its existence needs to be protected.. but upon investigating, that sense of self is completely seen to be a complete delusional fabrication without basis and then released. It seems to improve my fearlessness...

John Tan: Yes contemplation is a good practice but more importantly is to arise the willingness to let go. Not through analysis alone but recognition of the energetic pattern of attachment.

Actually anatta itself is sufficient to dissolve fear, just how deep the insight goes. Ignorance manifests as attachment but it is difficult to uproot as seeing through is only at the surface compared to the aeon lives of attachments and we constantly re-enforce such view. Wrong view and attachments beget each other and one attachment leads to another endlessly. The "willingness" that let go must arise to directly feel the afflictive chain as a form of energetic pattern, analysis itself is insufficient."

"A Pristine World Free from Sufferings

I have criticised corrupt gurus and institutions for the abuse they inflict. But going by this, there are endless things to criticise in the world, including the horrors that just happened in New Zealand perpetrated by extremists of ultra right-wing, islamophobic ideology and white supremacy. It is surely worthy of utmost condemnation by any sensible person. This is the horrors driven by a low level state of consciousness called "ethnocentricism" based on the spiral dynamics model, which is a narrow, group-centric identity as opposed to a more encompassing, world centric mindset. It is high time that the world evolve out of childish, infantile and narrow minded low level states of ethnocentric consciousness to embrace a world centric perspective, to focus on the real issues that confront humanity, including issues like climate change which will soon threaten the very survival of civilisation itself. These are all issues that can never be solved if ethnocentricism continues to be the predominant state of consciousness that humanity is in (and unfortunately it still is). Humanity needs to wake up from its slumber.

But still, what I've said is looking at these issues on the surface, merely the symptoms of a more fundamental root cause of suffering and affliction. More fundamentally, the root cause of all the horrors in the world is a mind afflicted by the tendencies towards greed, hatred and delusion. In effect, all afflictive activities are dependently originated not from a self or agency but are activities arising in dependence on conditions, particularly a deluded mind that imputes inherent existence on self and phenomena. Cut off the root causes of suffering and you will have peace on earth, a pristine, luminous and pure mind/world completely rid of any sense that "I exist", any sense of a self/Self, a world where nobody will be seen as enemies as not even the slightest sense of separation remains, and not a trace of hatred and malice remains to be found, let alone violence and murder or the need for these "wayward behaviours" to be policed by laws. Such a world is not fantasy, for many today are living proof that it is possible to live in such purity, via an inner realization and transformation, as I too am speaking from experience. The sufferings and horrors driven by this root cause of ignorance are endless, but all comes forth in dependence on the root cause of ignorance.

And I am saying this not out of desire for self-attention or all that silly nonsense. I have no ambition or the slightest desire to be in some role of being a guru. Instead of elevating the status of myself, it is my very intention to "normalise" and "demythologize" it, as the people who have attained this are mostly very ordinary people like you and me, not some 108th reincarnated avatar of the luminous king of vishnu. The state of awakening is utterly accessible and readily attainable by all and sundry. Widespread awakening in the world is possible and hopefully will come to be in times to

come.

I am against setting up an authoritarian structure, as I hold that truth, freedom and liberation is everyone's birthright and cannot be monopolised or institutionalised by gurus, forms and structure. I do not wish to be someone selling water by the river. However, the least I can do perhaps, is to point out the river - the possibility of a shift in consciousness. Life is vastly better for oneself and for others when lived from measureless mind/universe rather than the narrow confines of a solid and dualistic world of self and other." - Soh

"I should warn against any tendencies to reject or dissociate from any emotions and mental afflictions. Dissociation and rejection of anything is not the way of anatta and simply creates a repressed psyche while not addressing the root causes of ignorance driving the chain of afflictions. At the same time, one should be aware that liberation from afflictions is possible, however the causes must be discerned.

Dissociation strengthens the delusional subject-object structure in which a 'self/Self' is dissociated from the unpleasant aspects of mental experiences, while true insight into anatta and emptiness liberates afflictions without the slightest dissociation in an effortless manner. The last thing I want is for people to get stuck in some reified transcendent superspace as some avoidance mechanism to unpleasant emotions. In anatta, there is no such delusional transcendent principle to hide out from emotions or whatever unpleasant sensations there is. There is only the purity, presence, of sensations, colors, sounds, actions, without self/Self. A transcendent superspace, some sort of unaffected Absolute, any sort of an unchanging background 'Self' or 'Consciousness' is completely seen through as delusion and ceases permanently. All there is is the transient and radiant stuff of life.

So read this chapter with discernment and do not be mistaken that you should 'train' to remain in an artificially induced emotionless state, for that is like trying to trim the weeds (treat or suppress the symptoms) without uprooting them (dissolve the root causes)." - Soh

"There is a reason why the stress must be on wisdom and not merely controlling one's emotions. Many people have a wrong understanding of anatta. For example, most people with a shallow understanding of dharma mistaken "truth of anatta" or "realization of anatta" as a state of altruistic egolessness. Someone may be very altruistic, unselfish, 'egoless' and perhaps even heroic in the conventional sense but have no inkling of the truth of anatta, and thus while such a person may be very developed morally, is not developing the front of liberative insights. Liberation in Buddhism requires mastery of all fronts, not just morality, i.e. the three training of shila, samadhi and prajna - roughly translated as morality, concentration/absorption, and wisdom.

Conventional and altruistic egolessness is different from realizing the dharma of seal of anatta as being what the nature of reality is always already so - empty of self/agent/perceiver/doer behind what's experienced/manifesting in each moment.

As John Tan/Thusness have also said in 2010 before my realization of anatta,

"(4:46 PM) John Tan: I told you to focus on realization, but you are focusing on the wrong direction.
(4:46 PM) John Tan: if removing all the desires and passions are all there is, then there is just moral conduct, there is no need for prajna wisdom."

"John Tan: there is the teaching of ignorance, desire, anger as the 3 poisons. You have to eliminate them. There is the teachings of Dependent Origination and prajna wisdom, you have to arise these insights. It is taught that you must eliminate the 3 poisons, why not simply stay with that?
Soh: You can't eliminate the 3 poisons without the teaching of Dependent Origination and prajna wisdom [i.e. wisdom that realizes no-self and emptiness]
John Tan: how come?
Soh: prajna wisdom cuts through the ignorant framework of sentient beings which lead to self-grasping and attachments -- inherent/dualistic framework
John Tan: so why focus on the effect, the experience" - Conversation in 2010

At the same time, one should not be entirely dismissive of the emotional model, and my recent breakthroughs suggest that progression in terms of the emotional model is possible and realistic, although I do not want to make claims about my accomplishments (furthermore they need to be tested and observed over time)." - Soh, 2019

On how to practice with emotions (or in general) without dissociation, see the progression of practices in this article, a good and important read: Reflection and Presence: The Dialectic of Awakening

"When the correct insights and actualization is present, the effect (of liberating afflictions) is naturally present. But prior to the arising of the correct insights, people may try to mimic the effects, to great detriment - and this is dissociation and suppression happens. Mimicry is not advisable and will not produce the effect as it does not address the causal roots of afflictions.

Rather than practicing wrongly and ending up with psychiatric disorders of the 3Ds (Dissociation, Depersonalization and Derealization), focus on giving rise to the correct insights and actualize them in actual experience. If emotional afflictions still arise, it is far better to practice mindfulness on those afflictions with complete acceptance and equanimity than to repress, reject or dissociate from them. Repression, rejection and dissociation of any aspect of experience - afflictive or non-afflictive - is wrong practice, and one can be assured that one is going in the wrong direction if one is doing that. It should be noted that the four foundations of mindfulness (which is mindfulness directed to every single aspect of experience) taught by Buddha includes mindfulness of the mental states of afflictions and emotions. The Buddha has never taught anything like "reject, turn away your attention from them, dissociate or suppress them" but to be mindfulness attentive, aware, of these mental states. "...And how does a monk remain focused on the mind in & of itself? There is the case where a monk, when the mind has passion, discerns, 'The mind has passion.' When the mind is without passion, he discerns, 'The mind is without passion.' When the mind has aversion, he discerns, 'The mind has aversion.' When the mind is without aversion, he discerns, 'The mind is without aversion.' When the mind has delusion,

he discerns, 'The mind has delusion.' When the mind is without delusion, he discerns, 'The mind is without delusion.'..." - Buddha, Satipatthana Sutta" - Soh

"We are all fellow human beings who find ourselves here in the world as it was when we were born. We find war, murder, torture, rape, domestic violence and corruption to be endemic – we notice that it is intrinsic to the human condition – and we set out to discover why this is so. We find sadness, loneliness, sorrow, grief, depression and suicide to be a global incidence – we gather that it is also inherent to the human condition – and we want to know why. We all report to each other as to the nature of our discoveries for we are all well-meaning and seek to find a way out of this mess that we have landed in. Whether one believes in re-incarnation or not, we are all living this particular life for the very first time, and we wish to make sense of it. It is a challenge and the adventure of a life-time to enquire and to uncover, to seek and to find, to explore and to discover. All this being alive business is actually happening and we are totally involved in living it out ... whether we take the back seat or not, we are all still doing it. I, for one, am not taking the back seat ... because it is indeed possible for any human being to be totally free from the human condition.

...

The day finally dawns where the definitive moment of being here, right now, conclusively arrives; something irrevocable takes place and every thing and every body and every event is different, somehow, although the same physically; something immutable occurs and every thing and every body and every event is all-of-a-sudden undeniably actual, in and of itself, as a fact; something irreversible happens and an immaculate perfection and a pristine purity permeates every thing and every body and every event; something has changed forever, although it is as if nothing has happened, except that the entire world is a magical fairytale-like playground full of incredible gladness and a delight which is never-ending.

Put succinctly: 'my' demise was as fictitious as 'my' apparent presence; I have always been here, in this actual world of sensorial delight, one realises, for it was that 'I' only imagined 'I' existed; 'my' presence had been but an emotional/ passional play in a fertile imagination; an emotional/ passional play which fuelled actual hormonal substances, however, triggered off from within the brain-stem by the instinctual emotions/ passions bestowed per favour blind nature. Thus the psyche – the entire affective faculty born of the survival instincts themselves – is wiped out forever and one is finally what one has actually been all along: a sensitive and reflective flesh-and-blood body simply brimming with sense organs revelling in this sensuous world of immediate experience. As this flesh-and-blood body only one is this infinite, eternal, and perdurable universe experiencing itself as an apperceptive human being ... as such it is stunningly aware of its own infinitude. And this is truly wonderful.

Thus the search for meaning amidst the debris of the much-vaunted human hopes and dreams and schemes has come to its timely end. With the end of both 'I' and 'me', the distance or separation between both 'I' and 'me' and these sense organs – and thus the external world – disappears. To be living as the senses is to live a clear and clean awareness – apperception – a pure consciousness experience of the world as-it-is. Because there is no 'I' as a thinker (a little person inside one's head) or a 'me' as a feeler (a little person in one's heart) – to have sensations happen to them, I am the sensations. The entire affective faculty vanishes ... blind nature's software package of instinctual passions is deleted.

There is nothing except the series of sensations which happen ... not happening to an 'I' or a 'me' but just happening ... moment by moment ... one after another. To live life as these sensations, as distinct from having them, engenders the most astonishing sense of freedom and magic. Consequently, I am living in peace and tranquillity; a meaningful peace and tranquillity. Life is intrinsically purposeful, the reason for existence lies openly all around. Being this very air I live in, I am constantly aware of it as I breathe it in and out; I see it, I hear it, I taste it, I smell it, I touch it, all of the time. It never goes away – nor has it ever been away – it was just that 'I' and/or 'me' was standing in the way of the meaning of life being apparent.

Life is not a vale of tears." - Richard Maynard of The Actual Freedom Trust

"...The anatta definitely severed many emotional afflictions, for the most part I don't have negative emotions anymore. And either the anatta or the strict shamatha training has resulted in stable shamatha where thoughts have little effect and are diminished by the force of clarity. I'm also able to control them, stopping them for any amount of desired time etc. But I understand that isn't what is important. Can I fully open to whatever arises I would say yes. I understand that every instance of experience is fully appearing to itself as the radiance of clarity, yet timelessly disjointed and unsubstantiated.." - Kyle Dixon, 2013

Someone had the misunderstanding that Kyle Dixon is a "follower" of Soh and John Tan. Soh clarified,

"Kyle Dixon is not a student or follower of mine or John Tan in any way. His realizations happened prior to his encountering us, about eight years ago. He is a dzogchen practitioner and I am not. The fact that our insights coincide is simply a coincidence. There are some others who have had insights triggered by my writings, but Kyle is not one of them. Furthermore, I do not have "students". I also do not claim "full enlightenment"." Kyle has written a very nice account back in 2012 of his own realization: Advice from Kyle Dixon - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2014/10/advise-from-kyle_10.html

(Update: Kyle Dixon learnt Dzogchen from Chogyal Namkhai Norbu and since around 2012 has started learning from Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith. Had the good karma to meet Malcolm and Kyle in California in 2019 [completely coincidental because Malcolm does not live there and just happened to be visiting]. Malcolm said Kyle is the first to totally understand his teachings. Also, in 2020 John Tan and I started attending Malcolm's Dzogchen teachings which we think is very clear: http://www.zangthal.com/, https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2014/02/clarifications-on-dharmakaya-and-basis_16.html . Although I would add, Kyle did say he had learnt things from John Tan and I too. But I would say it is not some sort of formal student-teacher relation. I have learnt many things from Kyle too.)

"The conditions for this subtle identification are not undone until anatta is realized.

Anatta realization is like a massive release of prolonged tension, this is how John put it once at least. Like a tight fist, that has been tight for lifetimes, is suddenly relaxed. There is a great deal of power in the event. The nature of this realization

is not often described in traditional settings, I have seen Traga Rinpoche discuss it. Jñāna is very bright and beautiful. That brightness is traditionally the "force" that "burns" the kleśas.

The reservoir of traces and karmic imprints is suddenly purged by this wonderful, violent brightness. After this occurs negative emotions are subdued and for the most part do not manifest anymore. Although this is contingent upon the length of time one maintains that equipoise." - Kyle Dixon, 2019

"Prajñā "burns" karma, only when in awakened equipoise. Regular meditation does not." - Kyle Dixon, 2021

How Emptiness Liberates Afflictions

Taken from Reddit:

"Qn: I'm often wondering how understanding necessarily emptiness changes the way we relate to phenomena. For instance, how does this realization make my mind free from afflictions like anger, craving, clinging and so on?

Kyle (Krodha) replied:
Anger, craving and clinging are activities that in most cases, assume a subject-object duality. There is the assumption of a self that is interacting with objects, and that this self-entity as an agent can crave, cling, become angry at a foreign object or person that exists separately (from said self).

The experiential realization of emptiness collapses this subject-object duality so that there is no experience of a substantial inner reference point relating to external phenomena. The realization of emptiness also nullifies external entities, and reveals that outer phenomena are misconceptions, abstractions. Both sides of the dichotomy are uprooted, the self that can become angry, or crave, and the external phenomena to become angry at, crave or cling to... both sides are seen as a misconception or abstraction.

Emptiness is like awakening to realize that the appearance of a snake lying on the ground in a dark room is actually just a rope. Prior to recognizing the nature of that appearance, the alleged snake was capable of conjuring all sorts of emotions, fear, curiosity, worry, and so on. However, once the lights are turned on, and it is recognized that the snake was actually a rope all along, then the basis for fear, curiosity, worry and any other emotions or activities related to a snake are all evaporated instantly - because they were all predicated on a misconception.

In the same way, in realizing emptiness the basis for anger, craving and clinging would be evaporated instantly because they are also predicated on misconceptions."

Kyle: "The Samādhirāja cited earlier says:

Young man, bodhisattva mahāsattvas who have become skilled in the wisdom of the nonexistent nature of all phenomena do not have desire for any form, sound, smell, taste, or touch. They do not become angry. They are never ignorant.

Why is that? It is because they do not see phenomena; there is no object to perceive. They do not see the phenomena of desire, the desire, or the desirer; that which angers, the anger, or one who is angry; nor that of which one is ignorant, the ignorance, or the one who is ignorant, and therefore there is no such object to perceive.

Because there is nothing to be seen and there is no object to perceive, they have no attachment to anything in the three realms and they will quickly attain this samādhi, and quickly attain the highest, complete enlightenment of perfect buddhahood.

On this topic, it has been said: All phenomena have no existence; They are all devoid of attributes and without characteristics, without birth and without cessation. That is how you should perfectly understand phenomena. Everything is without existence, without words, empty, peaceful, and primordially stainless. The one who knows phenomena, young man, that one is called a buddha."

"I'm not qualified to give any sort of medical advice but sounds like you'd benefit from either continuing with some sort of medication schedule or if you choose to go without meds, at the very least have a therapist you can engage with on a regular basis.

Buddhadharma is great, and in certain degrees of realization does actually eliminate negative emotions so that they aren't experienced at all. They are "tamed" (damya) so that you form a deep mental and emotional resilience once you reach the level of "patience" (kṣānti). This occurs on what is called the third bhūmi, negative emotions no longer manifest at all. I only say that to share that buddhadharma is in fact a means to an end in terms of conquering emotional turmoil. That said, those are higher realizations, and you shouldn't bet your mental wellbeing on that type of attainment at this present time. It is better to take measures to find some emotional equanimity and overall peace, even if that means medication and therapy." – Kyle Dixon to a redditor

...

"On hand I have this:
The Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra states:
Affecting the mind, kleśa and vāsanā can be destroyed only by a wisdom [prajñā], a certain form of omniscience [sarvajñatā].
There is a lesser form of prajñā that is able to eradicate the kleśas, and then a superior form of prajñā that destroys vāsanās. Only buddhas possess the superior form and have therefore dispelled both the kleśas and vāsanās.
The Mahāprajñāpāramitāśāstra continues:
There is no difference between the different destructions of the conflicting emotions [kleśaprahāna]. However, the Tathāgatas, arhats and samyaksaṃbuddhas have entirely and definitively cut all the conflicting emotions [kleśa] and the traces that result from them [vāsanānusaṃdhi]. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas themselves have not yet

definitively cut vāsanānusaṃdhi... these vāsanās are not really kleśas. After having cut the kleśas, the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas still retain a small part of them: semblances of love (attachment) [rāga], hate (aversion) [dveṣa] and ignorance [moha] still function in their body [kāya], speech [vāc] and mind [manas]: this is what is called vāsanānusaṃdhi. In foolish worldly people [bālapṛthagjana], the vāsanās call forth disadvantages [anartha], whereas among the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas they do not. The Buddhas do not have these vāsanānusaṃdhi." - Kyle Dixon, 2021

"PW wrote: "From investigation, it seems that "intention" appears spontaneously due to past conditioning interacting with ongoing current/present circumstances. "

Soh replied: Not just past but also present conditioning. Nothing is fatalistic since unwholesome and unskillful qualities of mind, speech and action can utterly cease, both temporarily in our practices and permanently which requires the unfolding of prajna wisdom. That (the liberation of the three unwholesome roots - greed, hatred and delusion driving the various unwholesome thoughts, speech and actions, causing all manners of suffering) is the whole point of practicing the noble eightfold path (https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/SN/SN45_8.html), otherwise why even practice?

PW: Hmm, but if our actions already bear fruit of past and present conditioning, how does unskillful action cease *[if they are]* no other than causes/conditions of skillful action ripening due to past skillful karmic deeds? Are not the seeds already planted and it's just a matter of witnessing manifestation unfold and the fruits of action to take place?

Soh: Actually you need to study the twelve links of dependent origination.

Ignorance drives the afflictive cycle of birth. The taints are the underlying tendencies towards grasping, craving, aversion, and other manners of afflictions. Ignorance and taints support each other. Through wisdom, ignorance is abandoned and the taints and its manifestations including the three unwholesome roots, the unwholesome actions that derive from them and their results cease.

But as a concrete example, I can say that after anatta realization, for the past eight years there is no way I could intentionally kill or injure another being, even insects. There is no self/Self here, and beings are not seen as external to oneself or as enemies (but I do not subsume everyone and everything to be extensions of a cosmic all-pervasive Self as in John Tan Stage 1 to 4, there is simply no identities here whatsoever, be it an egoic individual self or a cosmic all-pervasive Self with the capital 'S'), but gaplessly (as in without the slightest sense of a gap between a subjective perceiver and a perceived object) and directly experienced as close as one's heartbeat, which is to say not even the slightest sense of distance or separation whatsoever. And I have not experienced even the slightest sense of a subject/object split or agency for the past 8 years. In actualizing this there can be no intention of harming just like one does not harm one's body.

Read this sutta (teaching of Buddha) on the 12 links: https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.009.ntbb.html

The Wholesome and the Unwholesome

3. "When, friends, a noble disciple understands the unwholesome, the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome, and the root of the wholesome, in that way he is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma.

4. "And what, friends, is the unwholesome, what is the root of the unwholesome, what is the wholesome, what is the root of the wholesome? Killing living beings is unwholesome; taking what is not given is unwholesome; misconduct in sensual pleasures is unwholesome; false speech is unwholesome; malicious speech is unwholesome; harsh speech is unwholesome; gossip is unwholesome; covetousness is unwholesome; ill will is unwholesome; wrong view is unwholesome. This is called the unwholesome.

5. "And what is the root of the unwholesome? Greed is a root of the unwholesome; hate is a root of the unwholesome; delusion is a root of the unwholesome. This is called the root of the unwholesome.

6. "And what is the wholesome? Abstention from killing living beings is wholesome; abstention from taking what is not given is wholesome; abstention from misconduct in sensual pleasures is wholesome; abstention from false speech is wholesome; abstention from malicious speech is wholesome; abstention from harsh speech is wholesome; abstention from gossip is wholesome; non-covetousness is wholesome; non-ill will is wholesome; right view is wholesome. This is called the wholesome.

7. "And what is the root of the wholesome? Non-greed is a root of the wholesome; non-hate is a root of the wholesome; non-delusion is a root of the wholesome. This is called the root of the wholesome.

8. "When a noble disciple has thus understood the unwholesome, the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome, and the root of the wholesome, he entirely abandons the underlying tendency to lust, he abolishes the underlying tendency to aversion, he extirpates the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am,' and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of suffering. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma and has arrived at this true Dhamma."

PW: That's super interesting. That answers my other post. My teacher mentioned about refraining from killing ants after I mentioned that I had setup bait because a bunch of them invaded my kitchen. He proposed the idea of skillfully sealing off their entrances.

Looks like I still have a lot of work to do, things to realize, and room to grow. Glad I came across you and this forum. It's been a steady positive influence in helping me understand.

PW later wrote: I was re-reading the twelve links of dependent origination. It seems to recommend the cessation or stopping of all of the various links anywhere along the chain, so to end all causes and effects. It came across a bit anti-life to me. So is it basically saying it's better to have not existed in the first place? To stop all appearances and phenomenon.

To stop the cycle of physical birth and death, since along with it comes the whole mass of suffering. Or is it talking about the birth and death of the sense of "I"?

Assuming it's the physical that's being referred, does that mean to achieve this, is to be snuffed out of existence and to be eternally nothing? Or to get snuffed out of existence and to realize you are essentially everything and eternal?

And then what happens upon death since the cycle has been escaped, is what remains the eternal bliss of nothingness?

Soh replied: The Buddha was not averse to life. But he was also not craving for becoming or existence. If you are anti-life in the sense of becoming averse to life, then you crave for annihilation, which is another extreme.

He advises the ending of craving and the process of birth or becoming.

It's about coming to peace. Free from craving, fear, aversion, grasping, conceit or sense of I AM or I shall be.

He does not generate volition towards either being or non-being.

Buddha:

"...22. "He understands thus: 'If I were to direct this equanimity, so purified and bright, to the base of infinite space and to develop my mind accordingly, this would be conditioned. If I were to direct this equanimity, so purified and bright, to the base of infinite consciousness ... to the base of nothingness ... to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception and to develop my mind accordingly, this would be conditioned.' He does not form any condition or generate any volition tending towards either being or non-being. Since he does not form any condition or generate any volition tending towards either being or non-being, he does not cling to anything in this world. When he does not cling, he is not agitated. When he is not agitated, he personally attains Nibbāna. He understands thus: 'Birth is destroyed, the holy life has been lived, what had to be done has been done, there is no more coming to any state of being.'"

And:

Buddha said in **Dhātuvibhanga Sutta: The Exposition of the Elements**

https://www.wisdompubs.org/book/middle-length-discourses-buddha/selections/middle-length-discourses-140-dhatuvibhanga-sutta

28. "Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced covetousness, desire, and lust; now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Formerly, when he was ignorant, he experienced anger, ill will, and hate; now he has abandoned them, cut them off at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Formerly,

when he was ignorant, he experienced ignorance and delusion; now he has abandoned them, cut them off [246] at the root, made them like a palm stump, done away with them so that they are no longer subject to future arising. Therefore a bhikkhu possessing [this peace] possesses the supreme foundation of peace. For this, bhikkhu, is the supreme noble peace, namely, the pacification of lust, hate, and delusion.

29. "So it was with reference to this that it was said: 'One should not neglect wisdom, should preserve truth, should cultivate relinquishment, and should train for peace.'

30. "'The tides of conceiving do not sweep over one who stands upon these [foundations], and when the tides of conceiving no longer sweep over him he is called a sage at peace.' So it was said. And with reference to what was this said?

31. "Bhikkhu, 'I am' is a conceiving; 'I am this' is a conceiving; 'I shall be' is a conceiving; 'I shall not be' is a conceiving; 'I shall be possessed of form' is a conceiving; 'I shall be formless' is a conceiving; 'I shall be percipient' is a conceiving; 'I shall be non-percipient' is a conceiving; 'I shall be neither-percipient-nor-non-percipient' is a conceiving. Conceiving is a disease, conceiving is a tumour, conceiving is a dart. By overcoming all conceivings, bhikkhu, one is called a sage at peace. And the sage at peace is not born, does not age, does not die; he is not shaken and is not agitated. For there is nothing present in him by which he might be born. Not being born, how could he age? Not ageing, how could he die? Not dying, how could he be shaken? Not being shaken, why should he be agitated?

32. "So it was with reference to this that it was said: 'The tides of conceiving do not sweep over one who stands upon these [foundations], and when the tides of conceiving no longer sweep over him he is called a sage at peace.' Bhikkhu, bear in mind this brief exposition of the six elements."

Buddha is equanimous and does not give rise to craving or aversion to whatever manifests in experience:

"He remains focused on feelings... mind... mental qualities in & of themselves—ardent,2 alert,3 & mindful4—subduing greed & distress with reference to the world."

Giving rise to aversion with regards to aversion does not cause the end of aversion. The path of abandoning afflictions is through insight of things as they are." - Conversation in the Awakening to Reality Discussion Group

"The 10 fetters are removed by the perfection of 戒定慧 (precepts, samadhi and wisdom) in Theravada teaching... ...so in addition to that [insight], you must also practice samadhi for tranquility and calm" - John Tan, 2011

The Buddha taught that the cultivation of both tranquility and insight is necessary for the abandoning of afflictions.

Vijja-bhagiya Sutta: A Share in Clear Knowing

"These two qualities have a share in clear knowing. Which two? Tranquillity (samatha) & insight (vipassana).

"When tranquillity is developed, what purpose does it serve? The mind is developed. And when the mind is developed, what purpose does it serve? Passion is abandoned.

"When insight is developed, what purpose does it serve? Discernment is developed. And when discernment is developed, what purpose does it serve? Ignorance is abandoned.

"Defiled by passion, the mind is not released. Defiled by ignorance, discernment does not develop. Thus from the fading of passion is there awareness-release. From the fading of ignorance is there discernment-release."

However, be cautious about over-claiming, as Daniel Ingram has this to say about Actual Freedom teachings:

https://www.mctb.org/mctb2/table-of-contents/part-v-awakening/37-models-of-the-stages-of-awakening/the-simple-model/

“Here I would like to tell a little story, a summary and simplification of a situation that unfolded over a few years. I knew four people, three were friends of mine before all this began, and two were people whose practices I knew quite well. They all began following a teaching in which a person claimed to have eliminated all emotions entirely. These four were good people, strong practitioners, and appeared honestly inspired by a practice that seemed straightforwardly helpful: notice feelings as they arise, see what causes them and how they function, and notice how they seem to relate to a sense of a self, with an emphasis on bodily awareness of those feelings and a commitment to being very present all day long and enjoying being here now.

The interesting thing is that all four of these people within a year or so of having started this practice claimed to have done it, and by “it” I mean eliminated all emotions entirely, replacing them with a perpetually wonderful perception of the freshness of the sensate world, a lack of time pressure, a reduced need for sleep, and some other benefits and odd side effects. This caused quite a stir in my community, but I was totally intrigued and impressed. Being willing to keep an open mind and revise my impressions as needed in the face of the seemingly honest reports of my fellow adventurers, I spent a reasonable amount of time with some of them trying to figure out exactly what they had done and how they did it, as well as adopting the basic practice of deeply embodying feelings as a focus all day long, and appreciating the sensuous beauty of the freshness of the sensate world; basically mindfulness of emotions and emphasizing rapture. I must say, it was in general a fun and interesting practice that seemed grounded on sound basic principles. I experienced various beneficial relative effects, but the elimination of emotions wasn’t one of them.

Time passed, however, and one by one, the four renounced their claims to have eliminated all emotions, with each stating something along the lines of having realized that their model had caused them to be in denial of what they were actually feeling to some degree. All four later arrived at the conclusion that the people who had inspired them were also clearly not free of emotions. One of the four ended up with some long-lasting psychological complexities, though the remaining three did better, and two of them did say that they did change something useful in the way that emotions were experienced, though the elimination of emotions was not that something.

So ended an interesting saga, but the end result, at least from my point of view, has led to four conclusions:

1) Beware of the limited emotional range models!
2) Investigating the sensuous beauty of reality, emphasizing rapture, and tuning in to the freshness of the sensate world, the body, and its feelings can be a fun and rewarding practice.
3) Be careful with claims of having done something final before really giving reality time to show you what subtleties and complexities remain.
4) Strong, dedicated, intelligent practitioners can be led astray and confused by golden promises of the spiritual marketplace, just like anyone else, so keep reality testing your practices to see how they hold up.

I know of a few other people (some of whom I have met, some by reports of good friends who have met them) who still claim to have eliminated all emotions (as well as nearly all thought), though those who have spent time with them all say that they still appear to have emotions, and can be moody, snippy, arrogant, and the like, just as anyone else can. Can I be certain I know exactly what is going on with them regarding their internal experience? Obviously not. Am I very skeptical? Yes, I am. However, in the interest of fairness, I present these examples just so that you can do your own research and realize that there is still controversy about this. Best of luck sorting it out for yourself. Regardless, the ability to modulate responses to emotions skillfully can sometimes give the impression that these emotions have been attenuated or eliminated, but that ability and emotional elimination are not the same thing." - Daniel M. Ingram

Also, this article by Daniel M. Ingram is a good read with good advice: My Experiment in Actualism-Influenced Practice, by Daniel M. Ingram, September 20th, 2013

"The topic is very complicated.

Attempting an extremely quick summary of a possibly very long discussion:

If you stick to reasonable first principles, such as paying gentle, kind attention to what you are feeling and wondering why (being mindful and inquisitive regarding of feelings and mind states), paying attention to how you are experiencing this moment of being alive (mindfulness and investigation of your immediate sensate world), paying attention to something pleasant about experience (cultivating rapture), and the like, then it is hard to go far wrong, and many who do these have noticed benefits.

If you begin to chase emotional elimination, then it is definitely true that people here and other places have reported some mild to severe problems as a result of that fixation and focus, as denial and repression are sticky and tempting traps to be ensnared by, as JC points out.

Best wishes sorting all this out.

Definintely keep your wits about you and listen to the feedback of those around you.

Daniel" - Daniel M. Ingram, https://www.dharmaoverground.org/discussion/-/message_boards/message/14283510

How should one practice while facing emotions? See the advice by Jean Klein and John Tan:

“Questioner: In certain situations in life I feel blocked by a fear which prevents me from acting. How can I be free from this obstacle?

Jean Klein: First free yourself from the word, the concept, 'fear'. It is loaded with memory. Face only the perception. Accept the sensation completely. When the personality who judges and controls is completely absent, when there is no longer a psychological relationship with the sensation, it is really welcomed and unfolds. Only in welcoming without a welcomer can there be real transformation. We are in essence one with all existence; when we truly observe ourselves there is ultimately no observer, only observation - awareness.

In simple openness which is welcoming you will come to accept and get to know your negative feelings, desires and fears. Once welcomed and nondirected attention to these feelings will burn themselves up, leaving only silence.” - Jean Klein

"Fear is just like Self, is a process being molded into a label. What hides behind this label is a vivid process of involvement, interplay between the causes, conditions giving rise to all appearances. The activity is alive and vivid. The flow of blood, the pulsating of the heart beats, the humming of the aircon, the cold air touches the skin, awareness is all these. It is a mere knowingness without effort to recognize anything, it is one whole sensing. All true knowledge must evolve from the mere Presence." - John Tan, 2006

“**RICHARD:** Of course the word ‘fear’ is not fear itself ... it is a name for it so that we can communicate. Do you take me to be an idiot? Some other correspondent came out with similar twaddle (offering me the word ‘coffee’ instead of the actual substance) and this is just as silly. Look, fear is the adrenaline coursing through your veins; the heart pumping furiously; the palms sweaty; the face blanched white; knuckles gripped; body tensed and so on and so on. Observing this, in both oneself and in others – and in animals – this is *‘observing with the objectivity of a scientist’*.” - http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/richard/selectedcorrespondence/sc-fear.htm

“You must be able to feel the crowd. If not how are you to understand riots. Have you seen people gambled horse before? They see the race, They stood up. You look at their face... Turned red...shooting. As if under a spell. Shooting and shooting. Otherwise how are you to feel and understand? Otherwise what you know is only theory. Get it? This is how anatta is. You are having too much thoughts, therefore you can't know. You do not understand what is meant by "stirring" up emotions. If you see without understanding then you are seeing with disassociation. You must learn to see with full engagement yet without attachment.” - John Tan, 2019

[3/2/18, 1:58:36 AM] John Tan: Just replied Yacine,
Many of the ways you described have the tendency of attempting to reason out something even when dealing with surrendering or visualization except 1. Taking a deep breath.
You are unable to see “fear” as energy. Using your “felt sense” to understand “fear” directly.

When you take a deep breath, must you “think” or “understand” anything to overcome fear? Must intellect be involved?
For example by seeing peaceful Buddha images, a feeling of calm fills the entire body-mind.
[3/2/18, 2:00:39 AM] John Tan: He won't be able to understand anything, if "energy" and "clarity" is left out. Attempting to understand by pure intellect alone is a wrong approach.
[3/2/18, 2:02:26 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[3/2/18, 8:21:12 AM] John Tan: Some of my approaches:
1. By doing deep breathing exercises
2. By doing yoga
3. By sincerely surrendering to higher power
4. By fully facing and accepting the worse situation
5. By chanting
6. By vipassana meditation
Fear can also be understood from the perspective of energy. Means you can recognise the energy pattern of surrendering, compassion, openness, peace or even anger to counter, transform or release “fear”. It may not involve the “intellect” at all.
In fact if you work with “energy”, you will realise thoughts and stories are the result of energy imbalances. When you have lack of energy or the body is experiencing energy imbalances, negative thoughts and stories will keep popping up beyond control.
I am not telling you to look into energy practice, but want you to understand the approach of logic and reasoning is one way but not the only way. To have intimate understanding of your mind/consciousness/spirit may require more than “intellect” or worst still, may sometimes require you to suspend the intellect to get it. To understand suffering for example, you may not want to use logical induction or deduction to understand it, you have to open your heart to feel it.

“Daniel's MCTB 4 path is not based on fetter model. The traditional Theravada 4 path is a 10 fetter model which is quite similar to AF [actual freedom] emotional model. So when Richard claimed complete elimination and overcoming of all emotions and achieved actual freedom, that sounds very much an arahat to me.

As for the phases of insights, I do not equate phase 5 insight as arhant and far from it. I also do not map the phases of insight according to any model, it is not meant for that purpose. It is simply a journey of exploring the breadth and depth of Presence and how the arising insights of anatta and emptiness turn out to be key.

In what way the phases of insight can help in eliminating the fetters imo (in my opinion) is very much dependent on the conditions of the individual, it may not manifest the same way for different people.” - John Tan, 2019

“[23/3/19, 6:17:25 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Actually I think emotions can still arise but in a much more muted way in PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) and seems to arise as some brief bodily sensations.. when you said you left the group earlier I still had no emotions but now I felt something but very different from before, it is so muted in the similar way

that my imagination is muted but still can call up a very faint semblance. I think you are saying these still arise and have to see it's dependent arising?
[23/3/19, 6:18:10 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Anyway maybe this anatta effect will be gone tomorrow or 90 days.. lol. I'm certainly not saying it's permanent
[23/3/19, 6:20:18 PM] John Tan: Emotions or not doesn't matter. Conduct is important. I have no attachment in groups or fame in spirituality. I do not wish to be known that is the best but writing those phases of insights have caused lots of karma...lol
[23/3/19, 6:20:38 PM] Soh Wei Yu: lol I understand
[23/3/19, 6:23:01 PM] John Tan: I am actually not worried nor emotional who says what about me, I am more worried about you...lol. Young, having some insights and experiences but roam everywhere, 到出踢馆.🤣🤣🤣

(Soh: **Verb 踢館**

1. (martial arts) to openly challenge another master at their martial arts club and demand a fair fight
2. (figuratively, in general) to openly challenge someone renowned; to challenge someone to a competition (as an outsider); to throw down the gauntlet)

[23/3/19, 6:24:23 PM] Soh Wei Yu: 😂
[23/3/19, 6:24:58 PM] John Tan: Instead of keep refining your understanding and treasure your insights and treasure this lifetime.
[23/3/19, 6:30:52 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[23/3/19, 6:34:03 PM] John Tan: Are you grateful that you are born with a healthy body, 2 eyes, 2 ears legs and legs?
[23/3/19, 6:35:32 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yes
[23/3/19, 6:35:33 PM] John Tan: What about having karmic connections that you have a supportive family. And a well to do family?
[23/3/19, 6:35:50 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ya
[23/3/19, 6:35:55 PM] John Tan: Do you feel fortunate?
[23/3/19, 6:36:01 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yes
[23/3/19, 6:37:58 PM] John Tan: Learning how to be grateful and have a thankful heart is even more superior than your emotionless achievement in practice even though that is emotional. Lol. To me that requires more wisdom.
[23/3/19, 6:39:46 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. But then emotionless is good in the sense of no fear, no sadness, hate, etc. But I don't see any problems with loving kindness and gratitude.. I'm grateful but currently not in a very emotional way.. means these healthy emotional aspects have to be cultivated? I think non clinging is more important. Emotionless is probably just a side effect currently..
[23/3/19, 6:46:02 PM] John Tan: To me I prefer to laugh and cry wholeheartedly
[23/3/19, 6:46:57 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[23/3/19, 6:48:17 PM] John Tan: So anatta to you maybe emotionless, to me is full and total and boundless expression. Radiance is just one of such expressions. Your anatta is out of the world, my anatta is full engagement in this world. Lol

[23/3/19, 6:51:22 PM] Soh Wei Yu: My anatta is fully engaged but then emotionless is like a side effect.. but I think will see whether it lasts. But I think richard is a little different.

I'm not trying to suppress emotions and also imagination having difficulty being called up is a very surprising effect for me actually
[23/3/19, 6:51:35 PM] John Tan: So it is different. I don't have that issue about emotion. I don't have issue about being fully human...lol
[23/3/19, 6:52:27 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Richard's no imagination at all is very strange
[23/3/19, 6:52:29 PM] John Tan: I love my kids and parents. That to me is my radiance. So I can be in and out without leaving traces. I am grateful I have a body, I am grateful to have this healthy body. I do not wish I had an accident and lost a leg and a hand and one eye. Do you wish that?
[23/3/19, 6:55:51 PM] Soh Wei Yu: No
[23/3/19, 6:56:34 PM] John Tan: Can you pray hard that next life you have that so that you can practice like those accomplished lama? I can't...lol
[23/3/19, 6:57:07 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic lol.. ya I don't wish that
[23/3/19, 6:57:37 PM] John Tan: 🤣🤣🤣 I still pray hard that my phases of insights not leave me.
[23/3/19, 7:19:15 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. I realise there's all kinds of versions of enlightenment.. and there's no need to really set one standard as ultimate. I wrote this in dharma overground a month ago.. like Greg Goode, I consider myself a pluralist nowadays, and I appreciate all teachings
[23/3/19, 7:24:12 PM] John Tan: Not been able to visualize is not an achievement, it is due to change in mode of perception.
[23/3/19, 7:24:33 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yes to me it's a side effect from the mode of perception
[23/3/19, 7:24:59 PM] John Tan: Elimination of 贪嗔痴慢疑 the five poisons is not to be emotionless. *(Soh: the five poisons of passion, aggression, delusion, conceit [commonly translated as pride but has a deeper meaning of the 'conceit of I Am', in other words, the sense of self], doubt [skeptical doubts about dharma dissolves upon the attainment of stream entry or the first bhumi due to direct experiential realization])*
[23/3/19, 7:25:40 PM] John Tan: I have not much of those [five poisons]. When one is not subject to adverse conditions, we tend to over claim and that is a sign of immaturity. Not achievement. Anyway, just practice wholeheartedly and not overclaim. If you truly want people to have non-dual and effortless experience in presence, just write about your experience. No need to comment on others achievement. You can tell people thusness is not there yet because he told you he has full of emotions... lol. I prefer that to be the case rather than having all sorts of myth. 🤣
My constant joy does not come from emotionless, it comes from deconditioning.

(Soh: John Tan later said that he is pretty unemotional after anatta and he is also 'fearless', however in extreme circumstances "Like tiger eating your flesh or doing those vows [a vow to allow you to practice with unfortunate, disease and ill fate] I will have bodily resistance")
[23/3/19, 7:37:13 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. Actually the emotionless state of this PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) is also as unexpected as lack of imagination for me... I remember I used to [be able to] feel "shitty" but this state is

simply of perfection. But I agree with you even emotions is the radiance and if they come up here there will be no repression.. I don't want to suppress emotions lol
[23/3/19, 7:40:49 PM] John Tan: There is no need to, but mistaking it as a goal is the issue. Conditions are infinite, our attachments are subtle. And often difficult to detect. We should not overclaim and the inability to contain oneself is already a sign of one's lack of practice. Attracted to PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) too. I experience so intense radiance several times but who knows about it.
[23/3/19, 7:43:32 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic yeah I definitely think I'm a little attracted to PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) now.. maybe after a while I'll get over it
[23/3/19, 7:44:15 PM] John Tan: The inability to contain it is already a sign of one's immature practice. Rather than getting too excited, look into what exactly give rise to those results. If one day we are old, our eyes can't see and eyes can't hear, can't walk... all these are normal conditions in old age. How our state of mind will be we do not know... even if you are confident, we do not claim. I am not saying that criticising traditions or masters is wrong by the way. Lol. However saying or suggesting the phases of insights are beyond them is not ok... lol
[23/3/19, 8:08:42 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic yeah I made clear in a post this morning that all the Buddhist traditions are in line with anatta and emptiness even though most of the modern Teachers are not... lol
[23/3/19, 8:09:30 PM] John Tan: Yeah I read

[24/3/19, 11:17:05 PM] John Tan: From the perspective of clarity, it is true that Buddhism anatta and emptiness is more profound and deep... lol. But still good to caution about respecting all religions and practice. Why empty clarity is only pointed out in buddhism. So although it is true about all points to pure consciousness, it is realizing the emptiness that is the prajna eye to allow us to clearly see the empty nature of clarity. Otherwise we will most likely land in alaya or [be] required to still in deep stillness of samadhi.

(On this point, I was reminded of something John Tan said back in I think 2012:

"Every religion is talking about consciousness. It is the nature of consciousness that is important. It is like talking about "Soh" from different people. Of course all is pointing to "Soh" but when someone say he is an American, has 10 sisters and is now studying in India... we cannot say that he is correct and it is the same because ultimately we are talking about "Soh"."")"

"Yes sahaja samadhi but that remain as "experience". Just like in taoism, it is all about naturalness 自然 and non-action (action without agent) though there are overlaps but they are different in praxis and view essentially. There is no need to forcefully integrate the various religions into one, that is just more attachment.

Although there is no monopoly over truth as ultimately all is/are talking about one's primordial nature but there are those that much clearer and precise in their system of practice. If the views and philosophies are 90% inherent and dualistic, the result from such a system will at best be a stage to be achieved albeit the emphasis of "natural state".

As I said before, if someone were to say "Soh is a malay, a speckie, used to be a c# programmer, 1.9m tall and has a sister", obviously some informations are correct and some are misleading. Even if you were to stand right in front of

him, he will not be able to recognize you. Therefore although all are talking about the natural condition of pristine consciousness, some are exceptionally clearer than others." – John Tan, 2020

Kyle Dixon wrote:

"There are different types of spiritual awakening, and liberation is even defined differently in different religions and systems. The point is that liberation as defined by the buddhadharma is only available to those who engage in the methodologies of the buddhadharma in accordance with right view and so on. Principally dependent origination [pratītyasamutpāda], which is an exclusively Buddhist view.

Like Buddhapālita states:

Because we [Buddhists], in the correct way, see the nonexistence of the self existence of things which appear because the sun of dependent origination arose, because of that, because we see the truth, liberation can be accepted only for us."

John Tan commented: Yes. 👍

"*Soma999 wrote:*Hi Malcolm,

I am quiet surprised by your answer.

In the Bhagavad Gita - quiet a major scripture - for exemple, the liberation presented, and which is quiet strongly adopted by many schools, is a freedom from the circle of birth and death.

Malcolm replied: Yes, of course, all Indian schools who propose liberation propose that liberation means freedom from the cycles of birth and death.

Buddha disagreed with all of these schools completely, and taught it was only through adopting right view, i.e., the four truths of nobles, that one could attain freedom from the cycle of birth and death.

He taught that they mistook various types of mental states for liberation, mental states which in some cases last millions and millions of years.

The Bhgavada Gita for example, is an example of an eternalist scripture, and it proposes the best way to achieve liberation is through pure devotion to Krishna as embodiment of Godhead, though it lists other paths as well.

Saṃkhya is described as an incorrect view because it proposes that causes and effects are merely transformations of one substance. Yoga also suffers from this view.

Jainism is clearly refuted by the Buddha. This is a no brainer. The Buddha thought that Mahathera was a complete fool.

Nyaya and Vaishesika did not exist during the time of the Buddha, but their eternalist atomism was soundly negated by later Buddhist scholars such as Bhavaviveka and so on.

The Mimamsas do not believe in liberation at all, but rather believe in appeasing the gods through rites in order to assure mundane good fortune.

Advaita also did not exist by name during the time of the Buddha, but it is refuted for proposing that all reality is ultimately one undifferentiated consciousness.

When one reads the sūtras and tantras taught by the Buddha, one can see very clearly that all these schools are refuted either directly or indirectly as wrong views.

Wrong view cannot be lead to liberation.

There is only one right view, and that is the view of dependent origination." – Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2017

John Daido Loori, "The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza":

"To be verified by all things is to let the body and mind of self, and body and mind of others, drop off." Dropping off body and mind is a translation of shinjin datsuraku. This is one of the key words in Dogen Zenji's teachings. Originally the expression used by Dogen's teacher [Tendo] Nyojo (Tiantong Rujing). In the Hokyoki, Dogen Zenji recorded his conversations with Ju-ching while he was practicing at the T'ien-t'ung (Tiantong) Monastery. This expression, shinjin datsuraku, was one of the topics Dogen Zenji discussed with his teacher repeatedly.

Nyojo said, "Sanzen is dropping off body and mind. We don't use incense burning, prostration, nembutsu, practice of repentance, reading sutras. We only just sit (shikantaza)."

Dogen asked, "What is dropping off mind and body?" Nyojo said, "Dropping off body and mind is zazen. When we practice zazen, we part from the five desires and five coverings." Dogen asked, "if we part from the five desires and get rid of the five coverings, that is the same as the teaching taught in the teaching schools. Thus we are the same as the practitioners of Mahayana and Hinayana."

Nyojo said, "The descendants of the Ancestor (Bodhidharma) should not dislike the teachings taught by Mahayana and Hinayana. If a practitioner is against the sacred teachings of the Tathagata, how can such a person be the descendant of the buddhas and ancestors?" Dogen asked, "In recent times, some skeptical people say that the three poisonous minds are themselves Buddha Dharma and the five desires are themselves the way of the ancestors. If we get rid of them, it is nothing other than like and dislike. Such a practice is the same as the Hinayana."

Nyojo said, "If we don't get rid of the three poisonous minds and the five desires, we are the same as the non-Buddhists in the country of the King Bimbisara and his son Ajatasattu (at the time of Shakyamuni Buddha). For the descendants

of buddhas and ancestors, if we get rid of even one covering or one desire, that is the great benefit. That is the time we meet the buddhas and ancestors."

Nyojo Zenji said that sanzen is dropping off body and mind and dropping off body and mind is zazen. He also said that dropping off body and mind is being free from the five desires and getting rid of the five coverings. The five desires are caused in our mind by contacting the objects of the five sense organs. When we see, hear, smell, taste, and touch some pleasurable objects, we enjoy them, we attach ourselves to them, and we want them more and more. Or if the objects are not pleasurable, we dislike them and try to keep away from them. But they often come toward us, so we hate them and become angry. Greed and anger are caused by the five desires.

The five coverings refer to hindrances that cover our mind and prevent it from functioning in a healthy way. Those are coverings of greed, anger or hatred, sleepiness or dullness, distraction, and doubt about the principle of causes and conditions. These five desires and five coverings are discussed originally in the Daichidoron (a commentary on Prajnaparamita Sutra by Nagarjuna) as obstacles in meditation practice. And Tendai Chigi, the great philosopher of the Chinese Tiantai (Tendai) School, mentioned them in the manual of meditation practice, teh Mahashikan (Larger Book of Shamatha and Vipashyana). Chigi said that a practitioner should part from the five desires and get rid of the five coverings in the meditation practice called shikan (shamatha and vipashyana). Dogen Zenji was originally ordained as a Tendai monk in Japan and was familiar with the teachings and meditation practice in the Tendai tradition. Dogen was not satisfied by Tendai practice and began to practice Zen. That was why Dogen asked Nyojo if he should part from the five desires and the five coverings. Until then, Dogen Zenji was looking for something that is different from the teachings he learned in the teaching school. But Nyojo said that our practice of zazen should not be different from the Buddha's teachings recorded in the sutras and systematized in philosophical teaching schools. The next conversation on the same topic between Dogen and Nyojo was as follows.

Nyojo said, "The descendants of the buddhas and ancestors should first get rid of the five coverings and then the six coverings. Adding the covering of ignorance to the five coverings make six coverings. Even if a practitioner only gets rid of the covering of ignorance, that makes the practitioner free from the five coverings. Even if a practitioner gets rid of the five coverings, if ignorance is not gotten rid of, the practitioner has not yet reached the practice of the buddhas and ancestors."

Dogen immediately made a prostration and expressed gratitude for the teaching. He put his hands in shashu position and said, "Until today, I have not heard of such an instruction as that which you have given me now, teacher. Elders, experienced teachers, monks and Dharma brothers here do not know at all. They have never spoken like this. Today, fortunately, specially I have received your great compassion and have heard what I have not heard before. This is fortunate for me, because of the Dharma connection from the previous lives. And yet, is there any secret method to get rid of the five or six coverings?"

The teachers smiled and said, "Where have you been putting your whole energy? That is practicing nothing other than the Dharma to part from the six coverings. The buddhas and ancestors have not set up any classification in practice.

They directly point out and singularly transmit the way of departing from the five desires and six coverings and getting free from the five desires. Making effort in just sitting and dropping off body and mind is the method to depart from the five coverings and the five desires. Besides this, there is nothing at all. Absolutely, there is nothing else. How can it fall into two or three?"

This is Tendo Nyojo Zenji's explanation of dropping off body and mind. Since Nyojo was the original person who used this expression we should understand it based on Nyojo's teaching. To drop off body and mind is to be free from the six coverings, the three poisonous minds that are the causes of samsara. In just sitting zazen, we let go of the three poisonous minds. That is why Dogen Zenji said zazen is not a practice of human beings but the practice of buddhas.

Dogen and Nyojo talked about dropping off body and mind one more time in the Hokyoji, as follows:

Nyojo said:

The zazen of arhats and pratyekabuddhas does not have attachment and yet lacks great compassion. Therefore it is different from the zazen of buddhas and ancestors in which they put primary importance on great compassion and the vow to save all living beings. The non-Buddhist practitioners in India also practice zazen. And yet, non-Buddhists have three sicknesses. That is, attachment, mistaken views, and arrogance. Therefore, their zazen is different from buddhas' and ancestors' zazen. Shravakas also practice zazen, and yet their compassion is weak. They don't penetrate the true reality of all beings with wisdom. They try to improve only themselves and cut off the seeds of Buddha. Therefore, their zazen is different from buddhas' and ancestors' zazen. In buddhas' and ancestors' zazen, they wish to gather all buddha-dharma from the time they first arouse bodhi-mind. Within zazen, they don't forget living beings. They offer a compassionate heart even to an insect. They vow to save all living beings and they dedicate all merits to all living beings. Therefore, buddhas and ancestors practice zazen within the world of desire. Even within the world of desire, they have the best connection with this realm. They practice many virtues generation after generation and allow their mind to be flexible.
Dogen made a prostration and said, 'What do you mean by allowing the mind to be flexible?'

Nyojo said, 'Affirming buddhas' and ancestors' dropping off body and mind is the flexible mind. This is called the mind-seal of buddhas and ancestors.' Dogen prostrated six more times."

(Note: three poisonous minds: passion/greed, aggression/hatred, delusion
Five desires: the desire for food, the desire for sex, the desire for sleep, the desire for comfort and the desire for reputation)

"[Unwholesome] Conduct and [three] poisons are understood as part of ignorance." - John Tan, 2019

"Dogen was commenting on those nihilistic [wrong] view that desires, ignorance and anger are ok, that all these (poisons) are marvelous manifestations of wisdom." - John Tan, 2019

Another interesting post I saw by Arcaya Malcolm recently:

"Another interesting thing they do is try to show is that Dogen had a change of heart and rejected hongaku and BNI late in his life.
Noriaki cites this example, from the Shōbōgenzō shizen bhikkhu, as presented in Pruning the Bodhi Tree, pg. 123:
Some people say that, because the enlightenment of the Buddhas and Tathagatas encompass the whole world, even a speck of dust manifests that enlightenment. Because that enlightenment encompasses both subject and the object, mountains, rivers, earth, sun, moon, stars, and the four illusions and three poisons express it as well. To see mountains and rivers is to see the Tathagathas, and the four illusions and three poisons are the Buddha-dharma. To see a speck of dust is to see the dharma-dhatu and each spontaneous act is a manifestation of supreme enlightenment. They say this is the great understanding and call it a Patriarchal transmission. In latter-day Sung China, those who subscribe to this view are as numerous as rice plants, hemp. bamboo, and reeds. Their [religious] lineage is unknown, but it is clear they do not understand Buddhism.
All and all an interesting book, quite relevant to the present discussion.
..."
"Elsewhere, Malcolm also said with regards to hongaku ("original enlightenment"), "Definitely a wrong view, even in Dzogchen.", "Chinese Buddhism departs from Indian Buddhism in many respects. Still, the idea of "inherent awakening" is patently absurd and cannot be taken literally or seriously by any means." - https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=97&t=19453&p=283507&hilit=hongaku#p283507

Now I do not say this because I have 'faith' in Malcolm in a guru devotion manner, in fact if anything I am more familiar with, or follow John Tan's views and thoughts more closely.

But what Malcolm said here -- rejection of any substantialistic views including 'original enlightenment' is in line with my insights. Anything inherent is a subtle atman view and would not tally with my insight.
Malcolm also rejected the shentong/rangtong dichotomy as false and invented*. That being said, I think not all people who teach 'shentong' are falling into an eternalist extreme, because I've seen teachers like Thrangu Rinpoche teach Shentong very skillfully as inclusive of the emptiness of the intrinsic existence of buddha-nature.

* Malcolm:
https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=39&t=4894&p=51110&hilit=shentong#p51110

In 2009:

(7:37 PM) AEN: namdrol says there cant be original enlightenment as that wld be the hindu teaching
or atman
(7:38 PM) Thusness: yes because they see non-dual as enlightenment
(7:38 PM) AEN: oic
(7:39 PM) Thusness: you mean e-sangha ban them?
lol

(7:40 PM) AEN: yeah... alot of zen teachers and even moderators were banned during a period of time and e-sangha even received lawsuits thread etc
(7:40 PM) Thusness: by the way, that is also not hindu teachings
(7:40 PM) AEN: and members
oic
there were also other issues i think... some don't believe in rebirth etc... and some other things
(7:40 PM) AEN: im not exactly sure what happened
(7:40 PM) Thusness: that is neo-advaita teaching
(7:40 PM) AEN: oic
(7:41 PM) Thusness: because we are already enlightened so why practice? yet this will arise another insight
so this is also necessary. first of all if this is not true, how is it that so many practitioners are claiming that?
(7:42 PM) AEN: they have the view of an inherent consciousness?
(7:43 PM) Thusness: there must be certain experience or incomplete realization that led practitioners to such a conclusion
(7:43 PM) AEN: oic..
(7:43 PM) Thusness: it too is a koan. if one stops at One Mind, it will most likely end up concluding that way. yet it is also important that you come to the same conclusion. 🙂 just like I AMness
(7:49 PM) AEN: icic.. the original enlightenment is realised at non dual ?
(7:49 PM) Thusness: yes. i think i told you we do not have a perfect nature right? we have a dependent originated nature
(7:50 PM) AEN: oic.. but at the same time its spontaneously perfected?
(7:51 PM) Thusness: however it is also important that you arrive at the same conclusion as those zen practitioners. that is different. i have already told you many times not to talk about spontaneous arising, liberation or perfection. only after the direct insight of anatta and DO can you talk about that. this I have emphasized many times to you and written many times. this is because after the insight of anatta and DO, you are already purified and clear of the wrong understanding. ignorance is the cause of suffering, when it dissolves, you are naturally and spontaneously perfected
(7:58 PM) AEN: icic.. but even when there is ignorance, our nature is spontaneously perfected right, just not realised?
(7:59 PM) Thusness: nope..
(7:59 PM) AEN: oic what you mean
(7:59 PM) Thusness: to me yes, to you no. for i know what it meant"

Someone used to say that emotions should just be "accepted" in Dharmawheel and Lopon Malcolm pointed out that such notions are incorrect and contrary to the intent of Buddhadharma, and that emotional afflictions must either be 1) purified/renounced (as in sutra), 2) transformed (as in tantra), or 3) self-liberated (as in Dzogchen/Mahamudra). There is no such thing as "just accept emotional afflictions as they are" in authentic Buddhadharma (although they may be popular notions from new age or neo-Advaita teachings). Such a notion is alien to true authentic Buddhism grounded in authentic scriptures but are notions invented by some late teachers (be it Buddhist or non-Buddhist), and such notions lead people in a 180 degree opposite direction from liberation/Nirvana (cessation), which is clearly defined by Buddha himself as the very ending of passion, aggression and delusion even in this very life.

In the bhumi scheme, the first seven bhumis are 'impure bhumis' while the rest are 'pure bhumis' as they have overcome afflictions. Those pure bhumis are similar to arahants in overcoming afflictions through fully actualizing the emptiness of self, and the arahat stops there and ends cyclic rebirth, but the next step according to Mahayana scriptures like Lankavatara Sutra etc would be to remove all subtle cognitive obscurations through fully actualizing the emptiness of phenomena and overcomes subtle non-samsaric transformation body rebirth.

Whether you practice path of purification (sutra), path of transformation (tantra) or path of self-liberation (dzogchen and mahamudra), as long as you are in a Mahayana path, you will have to go through these two purifications eventually.

Arcaya Malcolm, teacher of Dzogchen (see: https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2020/07/dzogchen-retreat-with-arcaya-malcolm.html) recently said in his group that maps of awakening in Buddhism are governed by the elimination of the twin obscurations of affliction and knowledge, and that Dzogchen (Soh: which, along with Mahamudra, are considered the highest teachings of Tibetan Buddhism) is the same in this respect.

Also in dharmawheel he related the Thodgal stages to the bhumi scheme:
" According to Khenpo Ngachung, the paths and stages don't really map to Dzogchen, but you can explain things that way:
Visions 1 & 2, below the path of seeing.
Vision 3; path of seeing and path of cultivation (bhumis 1-7)
vision 4; end of path of cultivation and path of no more learning (stages 8 to 16)."

“There are three traditional methods of dealing with emotions: abandoning them, transforming them, and recognizing their nature. All three levels of Buddhist teaching, all three yanas, describe how to deal with disturbing emotions. It is never taught, on any level, that one can be an enlightened buddha while remaining involved in disturbing emotions - never. Each level deals with emotions differently.

...

Just like darkness cannot remain when the sun rises, none of the disturbing emotions can endure within the recognition of mind nature. That is the moment of realizing original wakefulness, and it is the same for each of the five poisons.

...

In any of the five disturbing emotions, we do not have to transmute the emotion into empty cognizance. The nature of the emotion already is this indivisible empty cognizance.” - Vajra Speech, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche

“Why would you accept afflictive emotions? They are afflictive and are the root cause of suffering.

Either you renounce them, transform them or self-liberate them. But you certainly don't accept them. That way just

leads to further rebirth in samsara.

M" – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith

"We do bad things, non-virtuous things, because we are afflicted. Afflictions are never a part of oneself but they do define us as sentient beings. If you want to stop being a sentient being and start being an awakening being you have to deal with your afflictions via one of three paths I mentioned.

Why am I a sentient being and not a Buddha? Because I am subject to afflictions. How do I become a Buddha? By overcoming afflictions and attaining omniscience. How do I begin? By setting out on one of the three paths, depending on my capacity." – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith

"Mr. JK said: What you're describing is the duality found in Christianity. saying we are impure and must better ourselves.

Kyle Dixon replied: Not at all, this is literally the teaching of Dzogchen, Śrī Siṃha one of the original Dzogchen masters, who was Padmasambhava's guru, states:

This is acceptable since a so called "primordial buddhahood" is not asserted. Full awakening is not possible without being free of the five afflictions... It is not possible for wisdom to increase without giving up afflictions. Wisdom will not arise without purifying afflictions. (Bolded and emphasized by Soh)

Likewise, Khenpo Ngachung, one of the greatest luminaries of recent times states:

In any system of sutra or tantra, without gathering the accumulations and purifying obscurations, Buddhahood can never be attained. Though the system of gathering accumulations and purifying obscurations is different, in this respect [dzogchen] is the same.

Longchenpa states:

All phenomena of samsara depend on the mind, so when the essence (ngo bo) of mind is purified, samsara is purified... The essence of mind is an obscuration to be given up. The essence of vidyā is pristine consciousness (ye shes) to be attained... That being so, it is very important to differentiate mind and pristine consciousness because all meditation is just that: all methods of purifying vāyu and vidyā are that; and in the end at the time of liberation, vidyā is purified of all obscurations because it is purified of the mind.

Even Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche, Mingyur Rinpoche's father, states:

Purification happens through training on the path. We have strayed from the basis and become sentient beings. To free the basis from what obscures it, we have to train. Right now, we are on the path and have not yet attained the result. When we are freed from obscuration, then the result - dharmakāya - appears... the qualities of the result are contained in

the state of the basis; yet, they are not evident or manifest. That is the difference between the basis and the result. At the time of the path, if we do not apply effort, the result will not appear.

Thus there is still much for you to understand about how Dzogchen actually works. You are only speaking of the side of the nature, the state of Dzogchen, but the side of appearances, the side of the practitioner, is not pure and perfect just yet. The two sides meet when the practitioner recognizes that nature, which is not presently known, and trains in the method and view.

5" – Kyle Dixon, 2021, krodha (u/krodha) - Reddit

"Mipham:

"All of the faults of samsara arise from the deluded mind which apprehends a personal self or a self of phenomena. Since this deluded mind also is adventitious like clouds in the sky, from the beginning neither mixing nor polluting the luminous clarity of the primordial basic nature, these faults are separate from the basic element and suitable to be removed. Therefore, the essence of the basic element is empty of these faults; it is untainted. Without depending on the polluting delusion, the basic element is luminous and clear by its own nature; self-existing wisdom permeates the thusness197 of all phenomena. It is not empty of that which it is inseparable from, the basic element of consummate qualities, because in its essence, this is the basic nature from which it is inseparable—like the sun and its rays of light.

In this way, the naturally abiding heritage is established as the unconditioned essence of the Truth Body, which is primordially endowed with qualities. Due to the potential to be a buddha, the Wisdom Truth Body, without decrease or increase, necessarily resides in the mind-streams of all sentient beings, because in training on the path, the potential to be a buddha is established by the power of fact. Also, since the Truth Body at the time of being a buddha is unconditioned—it is not possible for it to be a conditioned phenomenon that is newly formed by causes and conditions—it is established that "it presently resides as the essence of the buddha."

Regarding this, some people think, "If it presently resides as the essence of the buddha, why does that omniscient wisdom not dispel the obscurations of these sentient beings?" Or fixating upon the range of meanings of the common vehicle, they think, "Since the buddha is the effect and sentient beings are the cause, the effect being present in the cause is invalidated by reason, using such reasoning as the eating of food would [absurdly entail] the eating of excrement."

For you who have been guided by merely a limited understanding of the common scriptures and have not trained in the meaning of the extremely profound, definitive meaning sutras, it is no wonder that such qualms have arisen! These [objections of yours], however, are not the case. Why? Although the suchness that is luminous and clear wisdom is present in everything without distinction, when adventitious delusion arises in one's mind, the basis of designation of samsara is only this deluded mind together with its object; due to this delusion, one's suchness is not known as it is. For example, when sleeping, due to the power of mental consciousness alone, unrestricted appearances arise such as the body, objects, and eye-consciousness, and so forth. At that time, although the subject and object are observed and apprehended separately, the mental consciousness itself is not able to know its own mode of being, in which the perceived [object] and the perceiving [subject] are not established as different; even though it is not known, there is nothing other than this mode of being. Likewise, all phenomena abide as emptiness; even so, merely being like this does not entail that everyone realizes this, because there is the possibility of delusion—appearances that do not accord with

reality.

Therefore, since mind and the wisdom of the essential nature are [respectively] phenomenon and suchness, sentient beings and the Buddha are taught in terms of the mode of appearance and the mode of reality. Thus, using the reason that the effect is present in the cause to invalidate this position is simply not understanding it. In this way, this reasoning is that the evidence of a clear manifestation of the Truth Body at the time of the fruition establishes that the heritage, primordially endowed with qualities, is present at the time of the cause because there is no temporal causality in the mode of reality; nevertheless, in dependence upon the mode of appearance, it is necessarily posited as cause and effect. —LION'S ROAR: EXPOSITION ON BUDDHA-NATURE, 575–79

Duckworth, Douglas; Mipam, Jamgon. Jamgon Mipam: His Life and Teachings (pp. 164-165). Shambhala. Kindle Edition."

"krodha
Op5 points · 1 day ago

If you receive direct introduction your teacher will point out what is immediate. But there is a basis, path and result, not just a basis.

From the standpoint of the mode of reality [gnas tshul], there is no basis, path or result, the *Rig pa rang shar* states:

In the Great Perfection, Atiyoga, there is no basis, path and result, nevertheless a basis, path and result is taught.

We lowly practitioners however work with the mode of appearances [snang tshul] and for us, there is a basis, path and result... and we act like pedants here exploring that context.

However even in that context there is immediacy. The basis is already complete, originally pure and naturally perfected, but the basis is ripened into the result by the removal of obscurations.

The Clear Dimension states:

The difference between the basis and the result is cleaning the tarnish on pure gold or pressing sesame seed for oil." – Kyle Dixon

"Only Buddhas rest in prajñā at all times, because they rest in "samati" which is an unfragmented samādhi which directly cognizes the nature of phenomena at all times.

The rest of us do our best to cultivate concentration, dhyāna, which then will lead to samādhi, and after time we will awaken to have the awakened equipoise which comes about due to our samādhi being infused with prajñā. However due to latent obscurations that awakened equipoise will be unstable and our prajñā will be fragmented. The more we access awakened equipoise however, the more karma in the form of kleśa and vāsanā will be burned away, and as a result, the more obscurations will be removed and diminished. The path is precisely eliminating those obscurations, the afflictive obscuration that conceives of a self and the cognitive obscuration that conceives of external objects. Buddhas

have completely eliminated these two obscurations and as a result their samādhi is samati, a transcendent state of awakened equipoise beyond the three times." – Kyle Dixon, 2021

"No. Every liberated person has realized the absence of self, i.e., emptiness, and in so doing, has ceased being under control of afflictions. Degrees of liberation are determined by remainder of afflictive obscuration one must eradicate.

Dzogchen is simply one path among many to accomplish this aim. As the *Self-Arisen Vidyā Tantra* states:

If someone does not dwell in words and does not dwell in names,
that is Prajñāpāramitā,
the transcendent state of buddhahood itself;
it is obtained with wisdom
and is liberated from all affliction." – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2018

"No, the difference between a buddha and and sentient beings is the presence or absence of adventitious afflictions, as the Buddha states in the Hevajra tantra:

Sentient beings are buddhas,
though obscured by adventitious afflictions.
When those are removed, they are buddhas." – Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith, 2021

"(12:17 AM) Thusness: what has that got to do with self liberation?
(12:17 AM) AEN: it does not require disassociating, just experiencing everything as it is without dualistic and inherent view?
(12:18 AM) Thusness: are you able to do that?
(12:18 AM) AEN: no
(12:18 AM) Thusness: why?
(12:18 AM) AEN: bcos i still have dualistic and inherent views
(12:18 AM) Thusness: yes. therefore you must know that because we see with such views, without such views, that is liberation. that is why right view is important. if 'dualistic and inherent' view is dissolved from the deepest depth of our consciousness, that already is liberation. therefore practice is to meet conditions and see whether inherent and dualistic view arise. if it arises, then how could there be no suffering. therefore ignorance is the cause of suffering. it is the wrong view that shapes the experience. that experience with the wrong view is what that causes psychological and spiritual pain
(12:22 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:22 AM) Thusness: any moment you have that experience it is always so, so practice is dynamic to see such tendencies arise. because a practitioner mature his non-dual and anatta experience, his practice is dynamic as he realizes that all arising already so and always is so -- luminous and empty but we mistaken it as dualistic and inherent. it is the deeply rooted wrong view that shape and distort experience that causes all problems
get it?

(12:25 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:25 AM) Thusness: it is not negative feelings is already liberated...all sort of nonsense. did i teach you that like what Mr. J said? ignorance of seeing separation and inherent existence causes all these problems and negative feelings arise because of that
(12:26 AM) AEN: icic..
(12:31 AM) Thusness: so at that moment when you see that it is non-dual and empty, it liberates. if you do not experience that at the moment, how can you be liberated. when you try to get rid of the anger, you can't...either you are split or there is something inherent in you. so when you see the 'nature and essence' of any arising be it negative emotions or whatever as empty and luminous, it liberates. you see it with your entire body/mind/soul therefore it liberates. if you didn't see it, no. get it? you must see the nature and essence of all arising as so.
(12:37 AM) AEN: oic..
(12:39 AM) Thusness: therefore when Mr. J said, negative emotion is liberation, he is having inherent view. Because he sees awareness as the substance and think that since it is it, it is liberation and yet feeling pain. so that is confusion due to desync of view and experience with no clarity of insight, not knowing what causes the pain. so understand ignorance. understand how inherent and dualistic view causes the problem
(12:43 AM) AEN: icic.. you mean there is no pain when one experience self liberation?
(12:44 AM) Thusness: of course there is pain if there is pain. it is the all of what the sensations are
(12:44 AM) AEN: what you mean
(12:45 AM) Thusness: you mean when you taste sour you don't know that it is sour?
(12:45 AM) AEN: i know
(12:45 AM) Thusness: then when there is those sensations that arise due to the conditions, you deny those sensations? whatever that you have dissolved, it isn't there. whatever conditions that contribute to the arising, has to arise
(12:47 AM) AEN: oic.. but you said negative emotion is liberation is wrong view?
(12:48 AM) Thusness: I am going to address your whole post. But, please tell me this. How can you write these words, and then turn around and say there is no Awareness. This confuses me.

Thanx,
S9
(12:48 AM) AEN: ya i saw that post :P
(12:48 AM) Thusness: all your nonsense he is going to answer
pengz
(12:50 AM) Thusness: only when you resolve that this pristine awareness is luminous yet empty, that is liberation
(12:50 AM) AEN: btw i was trying to tell him that awareness has no identity whether objective or subjective
(12:50 AM) Thusness: not seeing pristine awareness as inherent and dual" – Conversation with John Tan, early 2010

A famous teacher with rather strong sectarian tendencies, Nichiren (a 13th century Tendai priest and founder of a large sect/denomination called Nichiren Buddhism existing today) was having such wrong views (e.g. Nichiren said that earthly desires are enlightenment) and Lopon Malcolm strongly criticised and ridiculed it in the past. Such erroneous

views have no place in authentic Buddhadharma, and know that anyone who makes such claims have not understood Buddhadharma properly.

Buddha: "And what, monks, is the not-fabricated (asaṅkhata)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the not-fabricated. " .... "And what, monks, is the death-free (amata)? The elimination of passion, the elimination of aggression, the elimination of delusion: this is called the death-free." - SN 43 Asaṅkhata Saṃyutta - more in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/09/great-resource-of-buddha-teachings.html

"The eye is not the fetter of forms, nor are forms the fetter of the eye. Whatever desire & passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there. The ear is not the fetter of sounds... The nose is not the fetter of aromas... The tongue is not the fetter of flavors... The body is not the fetter of tactile sensations... The intellect is not the fetter of ideas, nor are ideas the fetter of the intellect. Whatever desire & passion arises in dependence on the two of them: That is the fetter there." -- Buddha, SN 35.191 (PTS: S IV 162)

"My son, we are not bound by appearances; we are bound by our clinging to them." - Tilopa to Naropa

"The five senses arising with their objects are unimpeded radiance.

What is born from not grasping at objects is the unborn basic state.

Attachment to appearances may be unceasing but reverse it: meditate naturally settled.

Empty appearances arising free from the intellect is the path of natural expressions.

Do not see appearances as problems, let go of clinging.

There will come a time when you will arrive in the valley of one taste meditation." - Yang Gönpa

“It should be emphasized that none of the participants of this group Awakening to Reality claims to have finished the path, or have completely eliminated all emotional and cognitive obscurations* and thereby attained Buddhahood. John Tan have stated multiple times, phase 5 does appear like a pseudo-finality. However the traces of emotional and cognitive obscurations, and the need to refine one’s view (therefore the progression into Phase 6) is still present, although usually much reduced depending on one’s practice and

conditions. One can be radiant and free in normal circumstances of daily life, however it is to be time tested in challenging circumstances.

In terms of the model of awakening in early Buddhism, the Arahant who attains the fourth stage of awakening based on the ten fetter model has overcome the emotional afflictions and thus freed from the cycle of samsaric rebirths through the complete actualization of anatta, while in the Mahayana model the bodhisattva who attains the eighth bhumi has overcome the emotional model and are freed from the cycle of samsaric rebirths but only a Buddha (one who attained the 10th, 11th, 13th or 16th bhumi depending on tradition) has overcome both emotional and cognitive obscurations in their entirety through the complete actualization or maturity of twofold emptiness, even though the realization of emptiness of a first bhumi bodhisattva is identical to that of the 10th/13th/16th (the realization is the same, but the length/strength of equipoise and the latent emotional and cognitive obscurations eliminated, as well as the different qualities attained, differs). The Mahayana tradition claims that the process to attain Buddhahood takes 3 aeons while the Vajrayana/Tibetan tradition of Buddhism claims that it can be accomplished in one lifetime with examples of adepts having attained Buddhahood, however, I am not quite sure about that and not convinced that anyone living today is completely free from all obscurations and a fully accomplished Buddha. (I am not one who easily believes in things even if it is purportedly said by certain enlightened masters, but I can report to you what have been said by others and what I have personally experienced, it is up to you to investigate these matters yourself)

As for myself, practice is still ongoing. I am writing this so as not to give people the wrong impression that the seven phases of insights denote the end of the path, rather, it is just the beginning of endless and dynamic practice-awakening or actualization as Zen Master Dogen puts it." - Soh, 2019

On distinguishing the difference in attainment between an Arahat or Pratyekabuddha and a Buddha, the Mahayana scripture Lankavatara Sutra states, "...Therefore, Mahamati, the assurances given to shravakas and bodhisattvas do not differ. Mahamati, what doesn't differ is the taste of liberation when shravakas and pratyeka-buddhas or buddhas and tathagatas get rid of the obstruction of passion, not when they get rid of the obstruction of knowledge. Mahamati, the obstruction of knowledge is purified when they see that dharmas have no self. The obstruction of passion is removed prior to this when they become accustomed to seeing that persons have no self. It is when the seventh consciousness ceases that they are liberated from the obstruction of dharmas. And it is when the habit-energy of the repository consciousness ceases that their purification is complete."

Mahayana/Vajrayana teachers such as Arcaya Malcolm and others, as well as texts also indicate that the Arhats lack the realization of twofold emptiness and emptiness free from extremes. They treat aggregates, sense faculties and so on as substantially real, although they have realised anatman.

In other words, arahats purify the 'obscuration of passion' through 'seeing that persons have no self' while the Buddha further purifies all remaining 'obscuration of knowledge' through 'seeing that dharmas have no self'. Of course, there

are a lot of subtleties and depth in insight and actualization between a stream entrant, 1st bhumi, an arahant, a Buddha, and anything in between.

*https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Cognitive_obscurations

Two obscurations (Tib. སྒྲིབ་པ་གཉིས་, *dribpa nyi*; Wyl. *sgrib pa gnyis*) — emotional and cognitive obscurations.

- Emotional obscurations are defined according to their essence, cause and function.

In essence, they are the opposite of the six paramitas, as described in the *Gyü Lama*:
"Thoughts such as avarice and so on,
These are the emotional obscurations."
Their cause is grasping at a personal ego, or the "self of the individual".
They function to prevent liberation from samsara.

- Cognitive obscurations are also defined according to their essence, cause and function.

In essence, they are thoughts that involve the three conceptual 'spheres' of subject, object and action. The *Gyü Lama* says:
"Thoughts that involve the three spheres,
These are the cognitive obscurations."
Their cause is grasping at phenomena as truly existent, or, in other words, the "self of phenomena".
Their function is to prevent complete enlightenment.

"Clearing intellectual obscurity actually requires quite some shamata concentration that enables the mind to see clearly experience and how the conceptual mind process in a slow motion. It is like anatta but more complex issues are seen clearly in real time.

...

One can be free from subject and object division in experience, but one may not be free from mind-matter duality. There is intellectual mind/matter duality block despite experience being non-dual and anatta. Freedom from duality in experience does not mean you are free from mind/matter duality and the relationship between them." – John Tan, 2020

"Now having non-dual experience or a state of no-mind does not mean finality. We must also free ourselves from many more intellectual obscurations. other obscurations of cause. Like having non-dual or no-mind may not free on from the notion of self. Freeing one from the notion of self, may not free one from the notion of cause. Freeing one from the notion of cause, may not free one from the notion of existence. Freeing one from duality, may not free one

from non-duality. The color you see is neither inside, nor outside. It is inside, it is also outside. It is private, it is also public.

So it is neither too." – John Tan, 2020

"Before anyone can hope to overcome emotional and mental afflictions or knowledge obscurations, they must have given rise to all the insights in Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment , but this is not the end, they must cultivate meditative equipoise and samadhi conjoined with insight and then tune them up ever more until all traces of mental afflictions/kleshas/defilements are burned off in the light of prajna forever. See Buddha's teachings on this in https://becoming-buddha.com/yuganaddha-sutta-tranquility.../

Additionally, one must overcome the knowledge or cognitive obscurations that prevent omniscience or Buddhahood. The wisdom of twofold emptiness must be refined and deepened to the degree that all traces of reifying phenomena, not only in terms of 'subject', 'object' and 'action', but also in terms of arising, abiding and ceasing, in terms of cause and effect, characteristics of phenomena, internality and externality, existence and non-existence of phenomena, and so on. Knowledge obscuration is overcome by the wisdom of the emptiness of all phenomena.

The realization of twofold emptiness marks the entry into the path of seeing, the first bhumi stage of Bodhisattva path, but it is not the end -- Buddhahood, also known as the 11th, or 13th, or 16th bhumi depending on the map. It is said that Arahants and 8th Bhumi bodhisattvas have overcome all traces of emotional afflictions, while a Buddha has additionally overcome all traces of knowledge obscuration. The goal of AtR people here is generally Buddhahood (maybe some may opt for Arahantship depending on the tradition they practice - anyone is entitled to their own choice or preference for the spiritual path they undertake)" – Soh, Buddhahood: The End of All Emotional/Mental Afflictions and Knowledge Obscurations

Compassion and Loving-Kindness

Compassion is vital to one's practice and progression. Many years ago, John Tan informed me that he was expecting to have some breakthrough from the front of wisdom and insight for many years, and yet unexpectedly the breakthrough he was expecting came from compassion.

"You just have to be less conceptual. What is more important is to boldly let go of self and practice metta *(Loving-Kindness)*. It is the best way to actualize anatta." - John Tan, 2018

"Anatta does not deny you from being compassionate, on the contrary it opens up your mind, body and heart fully." - John Tan, 2019

"I have had experiences of love more powerful than maybe anything else, with no trace of subjectivity, just love

experiencing itself, justifying itself." - Bill Finch, https://www.dharmaoverground.org/discussion/-/message_boards/message/5580083

"level 1
krodha
· 2d

I suppose my question is manifold. If emotion isn't part of the mind's nature, do positive emotions such as joy and happiness need to be abandoned along with the kleshas if one wants to achieve a pure mind?

If you practice effectively and begin to have instances of awakened, nonconceptual equipoise of a yogic direct perception of emptiness, then you will encounter what is called prajñā, which is the transcendent and ecstatic knowledge of emptiness that occurs while in awakened equipoise. Prajñā is forceful and bright and actually involuntarily "burns" away kelśas just by virtue of its nature. As such, if you cultivate awakened equipoise, then each time you establish a samādhi infused with prajñā, more and more kleśas will be exhausted, and with them, the seeds for afflictive states of mind and negative emotions.

You will still be able to have positive emotions, but overall you will actually end up establishing a state of equanimity where you will be pretty even all the time, content and undisturbed.

With that your compassion will naturally increase, because compassion is actually an innate property of the nature of mind.

The prajñā or "wisdom" of suchness/emptiness that knows the actual nature of phenomena, manifests once the knowledge obscuration that misconceives of an inherent identity or "self" in phenomena is exhausted as a result of authentic awakening. The direct realization of an absence of self in persons and phenomena is then the basis of compassion, as noted in the *Sangs rgyas gsang ba'i lam rim:*

Being empty, it is always devoid of attributes, and free from the clinging to the notion of self. Therefore, the suchness upon seeing this forms the basis for the arising of compassion.

Padampa Sangye concurs:

When you realize emptiness, it would be absurd to do anything negative. When you realize emptiness, compassion arises with it simultaneously.

5
4
krodha
· 1d

So you're saying that compassion IS part of mind's pure nature and is not a coloring "hue" like emotions might be, according to the Dalai Lama's framework, correct?

Yes, compassion is considered to be an innate aspect of the nature of mind, and altruistic in that the aspect of karuna or compassion actually works for the benefit of other beings by virtue of its very nature. In some teachings it says that this compassion selflessly performs virtuous and altruistic deeds on behalf of beings.

Is the idea that the pure nature of the mind is inherently virtuous/beneficial?

Yes. We are kind and compassionate by nature. The less compassionate amongst us just have a bit more dust on their mirrors, so to speak.

From Ācārya Malcolm:

In Dzogchen, there is little need to 'cultivate' compassion since compassion is recognized a) to be innate b) will be expanded up by recognizing your own state.

...We all have compassion. So the way to increase it is to simply see that we have it, and exercise that muscle a bit more.

Then, when we recognize our true condition, our compassion will burst out like the sun behind a cloud.

2" – Krodha (Kyle Dixon) - https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/p15r8z/question_on_emotions_and_the_pure_nature_of_the/

"Hara's great. Along with a range of somatic practises from dr Reginald Ray it benefitted my own practice much in terms of developing stability, calmess and somatic grounding in the body, which helped me in turn with inquiry, analysis and meditating on instructions like Bahiya Sutta. Also I find dancing helpful as an energy, somatic and mindful movement way of practising (like vajra dances but also modern somatic dancing).

Apart from that being a Vajrayana and Dzogchen practitiober I use a plethora of methods to be found in these systems which range from pranayamas and yogic subtle body work through deity yoga, rituals working with symbols to mantras and dynamic meditaitons. I guess I like variety and approaching things multidimensionaly (though always do my best focus on one thing or two for some time to have a degree of stability and conscientiousness). Some people probably need more minimalism so I guess its individual.

Also metta and the rest of the four immeasurables along with tonglen have been helpful and Ive practised these a lot just before breaking through to Anatta. Thusness advised me a couple of months before that to practice metta.
· Reply · 6w · Edited" – Mr. RDT

"Monks, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handle **saw**, he who gave rise to a mind of **hate** towards them would **not** be **carrying out my teaching**". – Buddha

"Bhikkhus, even if bandits were to sever you savagely limb by limb with a two-handled saw, he who gave rise to a mind of hate towards them would not be carrying out my teaching. Herein, bhikkhus, you should train thus: 'Our minds will remain unaffected, and we shall utter no evil words; we shall abide compassionate for their welfare, with a mind of loving

kindness, without inner hate. We shall abide pervading them with a mind imbued with loving-kindness; and starting with them, we shall abide pervading the all-encompassing world with a mind imbued with loving-kindness, abundant, exalted, immeasurable, without hostility and without ill will.' That is how you should train, bhikkhus.

Buddha: "Bhikkhus, if you keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind, do you see any course of speech, trivial or gross, that you could not endure?"
Bhikkhus: "No, venerable sir."
Buddha: "Therefore, bhikkhus, you should keep this advice on the simile of the saw constantly in mind. That will lead to your welfare and happiness for a long time."" – Buddha

"My practice isn't esoteric but direct, simple empty clarity and compassion. My entire experience is currently free and liberating... and fills with joyous reverence and compassion. Very happy. An open expanse of brilliance clarity beyond description... without dual and solidity. My entire being is filled with/embraced with this clean, pure boundless insubstantial radiance freedom... energy dancing joyously and like gonna burst. I just want this empty clarity to be as natural as possible with this reverence and compassionate taste. Once your empty clarity becomes clear, powerfully present and naturally non-dual without concern of maintaining... the 3 states (waking, dreaming and deep sleep) will have a single taste. Deep Sleep and waking will share a single taste of bliss as if it is a perfection seamless continuum ... There is no concern. The strong presence will guide you... The greater the strength of this insubstantial brilliance clarity, the lesser the concerns. Only when our presence is weak there is the problem with distractions. It is like when a bodhisattva filled with compassion, he/she is not distracted with own's suffering at all." ~ John Tan, 2014

"[6:44 PM, 5/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Look outward at the appearing objects,
And like the water in a mirage,
They are more delusive than delusion.
Unreal like dreams and illusions,
They resemble reflected moon and rainbows.
Look inward at your own mind.
It seems quite exciting, when not examined.
But when examined, there is nothing to it.
Appearing without being, it is nothing but empty.
It cannot be identified saying, "that's it!"
But is evanescent and elusive like mist.
Look at whatever may appear
In any of the ten directions.
No matter how it may appear,
The thing in itself, its very nature,
Is the sky-like nature of mind,
Beyond the projection and dissolution of thought and concept.

~ Nyoshul Khen Rinpoche
[6:46 PM, 5/1/2018] John Tan: 👍
[6:46 PM, 5/1/2018] John Tan: Also practice compassion
[6:46 PM, 5/1/2018] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[6:47 PM, 5/1/2018] John Tan: Begin to channel energy out see how it tells you more about urself when you are in compassion
[6:49 PM, 5/1/2018] John Tan: The quality of experience, the joy and satisfaction by being compassionate. Relate this to anatta."

"Sometimes I wonder why must the topic frequently oscillate between emptiness and preserving an indestructible essence.

Perhaps after experiencing the boundless brilliance, the aliveness, we feel deep down we must somehow exist in a true, solid and substantial way. The more we experience our radiance clarity, the more difficult for us to let go. This I understand. Maybe we should channel some bits of our time and energy towards understanding the relationship between compassion and emptiness.

When watching Garchen Rinpoche movie that Piotr sent me, it seems that to Garchen Rinpoche, nothing matters more than sentient beings. Whether there "is or isn't" an essence seems to be a non-issue; if there is, he would joyfully and generously sacrifice for the benefits of sentient beings when needed. This is what I gathered from the movie.

I am beginning to see why Nagarjuna asserted that emptiness is the womb of compassion.

I am beginning to understand without the awakening of Bodhichitta, there is no true realization of emptiness.

I am beginning to see why Bodhicitta and wisdom are the causes of Buddhahood.

May Bodhicitta be awakened in our authentic mindstreams.

Homage to Bodhicitta." - John Tan, 2013

(Note: "**Bodhicitta** is a spontaneous wish to attain enlightenment motivated by great compassion for all sentient beings, accompanied by a falling away of the attachment to the illusion of an inherently existing self." - Wikipedia)

"Bodhicitta is your acting, your thinking, your selfless thinking for others," says Tsoknyi Rinpoche.
"When you don't have any solid self that you need to maintain, and all your energy is used to fulfill others' happiness. That kind of attitude – or action of mind – is called bodhicitta.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama always says, promote human values: love, compassion, tolerance. We have human intelligence. Use that intelligence inside as well, not always outside. Make it happy and healthy. And then within that intelligence, then you operate or connect with the outside world.

His Holiness is really addressing the love and compassion and clarity of human beings. Based on love and compassion – it doesn't matter what kind of tradition or religion – it's really about authentic beings. When we can see that, it's very reassuring to know that the world is good, it's in good shape." - Tsoknyi Rinpoche, 'Open Heart, Open Mind'

It should however be understood that the traditional term, relative Bodhicitta in Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism also implies the aspiration and intention to attain Buddhahood (full awakening) for the benefit of all sentient beings, and is not merely the practice of compassion. Ultimate Bodhicitta is the insight into emptiness. Both are indispensable components on the path to full awakening (Buddhahood).

Dzogchen teacher Archaya Malcolm Smith: "Knowledge is not a hindrance. Ignorance is.

First, one generates bodhicitta, the desire to liberate all sentient beings from samsara. This has two aspects, ultimate and relative. The relative aspect refers to the aspiration, and then practicing the six perfections. Ultimate bodhicitta means practicing śamatha and vipaśyanā.

One practices these two bodhicitta together, until one realizes emptiness. This is the first bodhisattva bhumi. One continues to practice, until the practice of vipaśyanā has eradicated all traces of affliction (desire, hatred, and ignorance). This happens conventionally, at the seventh bhumi. Ultimately, has eradicated all traces of grasping to personal and phenomena identity, and one attains the omniscience of buddhahood, this happens when one transitions from being a tenth stage bodhisattva to buddhahood. A buddha is a totally realized person. There is no other kind of totally or fully realized person."

Ven. Huifeng: "An excellent example of what is meant by bodhicitta is to be found in the Vajracchedika Prajnaparamita Sutra (aka: the Diamond Sutra). Conze's translation has:

The Lord said: Here, Subhuti, someone who has set out in the vehicle of a Bodhisattva should produce a thought in this manner: 'As many beings as there are in the universe of beings, comprehended under the term "beings" egg-born, born from a womb, moisture-born, or miraculously born; with or without form; with perception, without perception, and with neither perception nor non-perception, as far as any conceivable form of beings is conceived: all these I must lead to Nirvana, into that Realm of Nirvana which leaves nothing behind. And yet, although innumerable beings have thus been led to Nirvana, no being at all has been led to Nirvana.' And why? If in a Bodhisattva the notion of a 'being' should take place, he could not be called a 'Bodhi-being'. 'And why? He is not to be called a Bodhi-being, in whom the notion of a self or of a being should take place, or the notion of a living soul or of a person.'

It involves the compassion to lead beings to nirvana, and also the wisdom of emptiness that sees that ultimately there is no "living being"."

"John Tan: selfless compassion is further dimension of anatta. After anatta, practitioner must learn how to radiate the energy outward. But sometimes it may not be revealed. It also needs time to open up till a certain turning point. Then we can turn our perception that direction and emanate out compassionate energy. Need certain 缘 (conditions)." - John Tan, 2018

“Yesterday I experienced the same energy release as the time I watched Garchen Rinpoche. Genuine compassion is not only towards others but also releases karmic bond.” - John Tan, 2018

“After you have glimpses into two fold [emptiness], start to look into compassion. Take small steps at a time and start to understand what compassion mean... like practicing anatta and emptiness.

...

You must have enough rest, stabilize two-fold [emptiness] and develop step by step your compassion and sense of reverence towards things. It will bring you to new height. I am having zero concern of anatta and 2 fold... it is so natural and relaxed with added new source of joyful energy, don’t know from where. Like a brilliance ball of light radiating with joyous flow of energy.

...

If self-sprung appearance is natural [state] and [is] liberating but lack a reverence and compassionate heart, then you must practice metta.” - John Tan, 2014

“Anyway, the Prasangika approach talks a lot about compassion for several reasons. 1. Practicing compassion even in small ways like metta, as well as combining it with emptiness meditations opens the heart, and softens up the false conception of the inherent self. 2. Practicing compassion in all ways helps transform our motivation to help free all sentient beings from suffering. This can supercharge our motivation to study emptiness. Emptiness is not easy, especially in the very subtle stages approaching nonconceptuality. 3. When you realize the emptiness of the person (even just intellectually), your compassion grows by leaps and bounds. When you realize emptiness nonconceptually and globally, compassion becomes an unbounded unconditional love. In this particular emptiness approach (there are others), one needs three kinds of meditation to realize emptiness nonconceptually. (1) Compassion meditation, (2) Emptiness meditation, (3) Shamata.” - Greg Goode, 2014

Metta Sutta:

https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/StNp/StNp1_8.html

This is to be done by one skilled in aims

appreciating the state of peace:

Be capable, upright, & straightforward,

easy to instruct, gentle, & not conceited,

content & easy to support,

with few duties, living lightly,

with peaceful faculties, astute,

modest, & no greed for supporters.

Do not do the slightest thing

that the observant would later censure.

Think: *Happy, at rest,*

may all beings be happy at heart.

Whatever beings there may be,

weak or strong, without exception,

long, large,

middling, short,

subtle, gross,

seen & unseen,

living near & far away,

born or seeking birth:

May all beings be happy at heart.

Let no one deceive another

or despise anyone anywhere,

or, through anger or resistance-perception,

wish for another to suffer.

As a mother would risk her life

to protect her child, her only child,

even so should one cultivate the heart limitlessly

with regard to all beings.[1]

With goodwill for the entire cosmos,

cultivate the heart limitlessly:

above, below, & all around,

unobstructed, without hostility or hate.

Whether standing, walking,

sitting, or lying down,

as long as one has banished torpor,

one should be resolved on this mindfulness.2

This is called a Brahmā abiding

here.

Not taken with views,

but virtuous & consummate in vision,

having subdued greed for sensuality,

one never again

will lie in the womb.

vv. 143–152

Notes

1. The image here is sometimes misconstrued as saying that one should protect all beings as a mother would protect her only child. Actually, the parallel is not between the child and all living beings; it is between the child and one's cultivation of the heart: One should protect one's goodwill toward all beings in the same way that a mother would protect her only child. On this point, see MN 21.

2. This line has to be read in line with the Buddha's definition of mindfulness as the ability to keep something in mind. See SN 48:10.

See also: MN 52; MN 97; MN 135; SN 42:8; SN 46:54; SN 55:7; AN 3:66; AN 4:67; AN 4:96; AN 4:125–126; AN 4:178; AN 4:200; AN 5:20; AN 5:27; AN 6:12–13; AN 8:70; AN 10:176; AN 10:196; AN 11:16; Ud 5:1; Iti 22; Iti 27

Conduct, Ethics and the Paramitas (Perfections)

"When a person has direct realization of the nature of mind and rests in equipoise, he/she cannot help but be compassionate and harmless. It is not a matter of rules here. When one recognises appearances as a display of radiance and purity of one's self-state that is neither 'self' nor 'other', and do not mistaken them as one's enemy, through wisdom deconstructs and eliminates that imputed delineation of 'self' and 'other', it is simply impossible that one does something

harmful to others or does something for selfish reasons to the detriment of 'others'. As one overcomes the afflictions and obscurations, one's actions becomes naturally more altruistically motivated, even though awakening to the realization of no-self should not be mistaken as merely a state of altruism (it is the realisation of the nature of mind/reality). But if one does not have such recognition, or is not in equipoise, then one should be mindful of cause and effect and behave accordingly." – Soh, 2020

"[01:06] <ZeN`n1th> [01:04] <nub> tell me one thing that will make me automatically do all the 5 and 10 (moral precepts)
[01:07] <^john^> :)
[01:08] <^john^> in a state of no-self, all is performed. :)
[01:12] <^john^> why do we say that our buddha's nature is complete and nothing lacking. :)" – Conversation with John Tan, 2005

Someone once asked Saraha: "If I am in the state of pristine awareness, is it okay to commit a negative action?"

Saraha answered that question with another: "If you were in the state of pristine awareness, how could you commit a negative action?"

~ Ŧoŋpa Joŋ

"William Lim
ATR stages of awakening, and also that of Daniel Ingram's levels of insights, doesn't presuppose accompanying ethics that goes with these deepening insights yah?
For example, having Anatta insights doesn't necessarily make you a kinder person yah?

· Reply
· 5d · Edited

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
William Lim
In my experience it is correlated. Also i mentioned i became incapable of harming or killing insects after anatta
4
· Reply
· 5d

William Lim
Soh Wei Yu
understand that this is your experience.
But it didn't seem to be always the case with other people on the path?

Perhaps it is healthier not to presuppose better ethical behaviour with greater insights into reality?

· Reply
· 5d · Edited

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
William Lim
I would expect anyone who realised anatta to have similar experiences more or less. Also, 99% or more of so called enlightened persons haven't realised anatta.
But yes after anatta there are different degrees of actualisation
· Reply
· 5d

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
" a teacher might be skillful in his/her insights but might not have his/her humanity totally sorted. So students should be careful of various types of potential abuses that might happen within the spiritual circle."
I would go further than that. I would doubt whether a so called teacher has really deep insights to begin with, since 99% of so called enlightened beings have not realised anatta.
Generally those who realise anatta at least, in my knowledge, tend to be less problematic. But post-anatta there are also different degrees of actualization.

· Reply
· 4d · Edited

Soh Wei Yu
Admin
Anatta is rare - how rare? I only found two living teachers in Taiwan and China who realised it. In the west, especially Soto tradition, there might be more. But still it is not exactly very common.
· Reply
· 4d · Edited

Kyle Dixon later sent me a message, "I also became incapable of killing insects, or anything really. I haven't intentionally harmed another being since my initial insight" (Soh: initial insight of anatta)"

"[12:20 AM, 4/5/2021] John Tan: Haha...I think William is referring to Daniel's rejection of the fetters model and I think there is a section Daniel wrote about the myth of arahat in his book. However I see no reason why one should go against ethical conducts even though ethics are merely conventionally and socially defined.

That said, unwholesome actions are the result of grasping. They are in direct contradiction to the natural openness of anatta but it still depends on the degree of one's actualisation post insight.
[12:21 AM, 4/5/2021] John Tan: I can't find the post by Daniel in internet about the myth of arahat. 🤣
[12:21 AM, 4/5/2021] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[12:22 AM, 4/5/2021] Soh Wei Yu: i dont follow daniel's thoughts though, the “myth of arahat” are actually based on things buddha actually said arahats cannot do
[12:22 AM, 4/5/2021] Soh Wei Yu: i think daniel is lowering the standards according to his own idea
[12:23 AM, 4/5/2021] Soh Wei Yu: for example buddha said *The Nine things an Arahant cannot do: 1. Store up possessions, 2. Intentionally kill any form of life, 3. Steal, 4. Perform sexual intercourse, 5. Tell a deliberate lie, 6. Act improperly out of desire, 7. Act improperly out of ill-will, 8. Act improperly out of delusion, 9. Act improperly out of fear (from Anguttara Nikaya 9.7)
[12:23 AM, 4/5/2021] John Tan: Yeah 🤣
[12:23 AM, 4/5/2021] Soh Wei Yu: even stream enterer also do not intentionally kill, something that seems to align with my experience:
[12:24 AM, 4/5/2021] John Tan: Yes
[12:24 AM, 4/5/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Dhammapada Verse 124
Kukkutamittanesada Vatthu
Panimhi ce vano nassa
hareyya panina visam
nibbanam visamanveti
natthi papam akubbato.
Verse 124: If there is no wound on the hand, one may handle poison; poison does not affect one who has no wound; there can be no evil for one who has no evil intention.
The Story of Kukkutamitta
While residing at the Veluvana monastery, the Buddha uttered Verse (124) of this book, with reference to the hunter Kukkutamitta and his family.
At Rajagaha there was once a rich man's daughter who had attained Sotapatti Fruition as a young girl. One day, Kukkutamitta, a hunter, came into town in a cart to sell venison. Seeing Kukkutamitta the hunter, the rich young lady fell in love with him immediately; she followed him, married him and lived with him in a small village. As a result of that marriage, seven sons were born to them and in course of time, all the sons got married. One day, the Buddha surveyed the world early in the morning with his supernormal power and found that the hunter, his seven sons and their wives were due for attainment of Sotapatti Fruition. So, the Buddha went to the place where the hunter had set his trap in the forest. He put his footprint close to the trap and seated himself under the shade of a bush, not far from the trap.
When the hunter came, he saw no animal in the trap; he saw the footprint and surmised that someone must have come before him and let cut the animal. So, when he saw the Buddha under the shade of the bush, he took him for the man who had freed the animal from his trap and flew into a rage. He took out his bow and arrow to shoot at the Buddha, but as he drew his bow, he became immobilized and remained fixed in that position like a statue. His sons followed

and found their father; they also saw the Buddha at some distance and thought he must be the enemy of their father. All of them took out their bows and arrows to shoot at the Buddha, but they also became immobilized and remained fixed in their respective postures. When the hunter and his sons failed to return, the hunter's wife followed them into the forest, with her seven daughters-in-law. Seeing her husband and all her sons with their arrows aimed at the Buddha, she raised both her hands and shout: "Do not kill my father."
When her husband heard her words, he thought, "This must be my father-in-law", and her sons thought, "This must be our grandfather"; and thoughts of loving-kindness came into them. Then the lady said to them, "Put away your bows and arrows and pay obeisance to my father". The Buddha realized that, by this time, the minds of the hunter and his son; had softened and so he willed that they should be able to move and to put away their bows and arrows. After putting away their bows and arrows, they paid obeisance to the Buddha and the Buddha expounded the Dhamma to them. In the end, the hunter, his seven sons and seven daughters-in-law, all fifteen of them, attained Sotapatti Fruition.
Then the Buddha returned to the monastery and told Thera Ananda and other bhikkhus about the hunter Kukkutamitta and his family attaining Sotapatti Fruition in the early part of the morning. The bhikkhus then asked the Buddha, "Venerable Sir, is the wife of the hunter who is a sotapanna, also not guilty of taking life, if she has been getting things like nets, bows and arrows for her husband when he goes out hunting?" To this question the Buddha answered, "Bhikkhus, the sotapannas do not kill, they do not wish others to get killed. The wife of the hunter was only obeying her husband in getting things for him. Just as the hand that has no wound is not affected by poison, so also, because she has no intention to do evil she is not doing any evil."
Then the Buddha spoke in verse as follows:
Verse 124: If there is no wound on the hand, one may handle poison; poison does not affect one who has no wound; there can be no evil for one who has no evil intention."

There is a quote by Padmasambhava that John Tan liked very much:

"While my view is as high as the sky, my actions regarding cause and effect [karma] are as meticulous as finely ground barley flour" - Padmasambhava

"Padmasambhava said: 'Though the view should be as vast as the sky, keep your conduct as fine as barley flour.' Don't confuse one with the other. When training in the view, you can be as unbiased, as impartial, as vast, immense, and unlimited as the sky. Your behaviour, on the other hand, should be as careful as possible in discriminating what is beneficial or harmful, what is good or evil. One can combine the view and conduct, but don't mix them or lose one in the other. That is very important.

'View like the sky' means that nothing is held onto in any way whatsoever. You are not stuck anywhere at all. In other words, there is no discrimination as to what to accept and what to reject; no line is drawn separating one thing from another. 'Conduct as fine as barley flour' means that there is good and evil, and one needs to differentiate between the two. Give up negative deeds; practice the Dharma. In your behaviour, in your conduct, it is necessary to accept and reject." ~Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche

“Many new-age philosophers speak about a carefree life. But, without seeing the concordance between the two – of spaciousness and meticulousness – they fall into nihilism. They preach the high view of going beyond acceptance and rejection. Yet, lacking in skillful methods to ascend from below, and remaining indifferent to causality, they go astray. They slip into an utterly careless life of turmoil. In contrast, when a carefree view is practiced along with a careful conduct, the yogi realizes all experiences to be in one taste, that of great bliss.

Yet others, seeing the faults of careless life, tightly grasp on to the conduct. Though they remain virtuous and avoid harm, their virtuosity does not transcend the mundane. Clinging tightly to the cause and effect view, they do not see the liberating expanse. While they have the strength to ascend with the conduct, they lack the panoramic vision of descending with the view.”

- Yogi Prabodha Jnana

"Don't fall into wild fox zen (野狐禅). Conventional conduct and precepts equally important, otherwise [one ends up] like the koan of fox zen rebirthing 500 lives as a fox. 😆" - John Tan to Mr. LW, 2020

“[2/6/22, 12:27:46 AM] John Tan: As for Mr. A and Yin Ling conversations,:

No, for all practice purposes from top to bottom, karma is unerring and unfailing in all schools for both gelug or non-gelug, whether Tibetan or Chinese buddhism.

Even in direct path traditions, zen for example, we have the famous Baizhang fox koan that a mistake of saying not subject to karma led to 500 lives reborn as a fox. In mahamudra we have Milarepa undergoing tremendous hardship due to immense negative karma. In dzogchen we have Longchenpa warning against that too in his poem resting in mind's nature:

44. “The law of karmic cause and fruit, Compassion and the gathering of merit —

All this is but provisional teaching fit for children:

Enlightenment will not be gained thereby.

Great yogis should remain without intentioned action.

They should meditate upon reality that is like space.

Such is the definitive instruction.”

The view of those who speak like this Is of all views the most nihilist: They have embraced the lowest of all paths. How strange this is! They want a fruit but have annulled its cause.

46.

The true, authentic path asserts

The arising in dependence of both cause and fruit,

The natural union of skillful means and wisdom.

Through the causality of nonexistent but appearing acts,

Through meditation on the nonexistent but appearing path,

The fruit is gained, appearing and yet nonexistent;

And for the sake of nonexistent but appearing beings,

Enlightened acts, appearing and yet nonexistent, manifest.

Such is pure causality's profound interdependence.

This is the essential pith

Of all the sūtra texts whose meaning is definitive

And indeed of all the tantras.

Through the joining of the two accumulations,

The generation and perfection stages,

Perfect buddhahood is swiftly gained.

[2/6/22, 12:37:19 AM] John Tan: If Padmasambhava that can cast hand and foot prints on the rocks also take karma seriously, we just have to know and take it seriously that karma as action of body, speech and mind have consequent and bear fruit.

[2/6/22, 12:37:52 AM] Soh Wei Yu: oic..

[2/6/22, 1:17:04 AM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted

[2/6/22, 9:34:41 AM] John Tan: Verse 44 already stated it clear. Even if one takes result as the path in great perfection, one should not have the slightest sense of scorning karma. In other words, as padmasambhava put it "My realization is higher than the sky. But my observance of karma is finer than grains of flour."

[2/6/22, 10:01:24 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Wah lzls wants me to share to jiang tang.. i bad at speeches

[2/6/22, 10:01:30 AM] Soh Wei Yu: image omitted

[2/6/22, 10:08:50 AM] John Tan: Dharmakaya is the full actualization of emptiness and is only seen by buddhas, not seen even by bodhisattvas. I am not disputing what Mr. A said about the view, but I m pointing out that one having right understanding of the perfect view is likewise equally respectful of karma. The ultimate does not contradict the conventional. So still like what padmasambhava said, the view can be higher than sky, but the respect for karma is finer than grain.

[2/6/22, 11:40:16 AM] John Tan: Don't worry. Learn how to observe conditions.

Just narrate ur experiences.

Point out clarity if needed first, then talk about emptiness later. Look for some pages of grand master shen Kai that has no dual and emptiness will be easier.

[2/6/22, 12:49:51 PM] John Tan: In fact you shouldn't even prepare anything, Let ur natural radiance shines unimpeded. Don't be hindered by whatsoever, even most profound teachings must be dropped. Fully open up, fully empty, fully engaged. If ur lzls or anyone asked in ur temple about the nature of one's mind, how can you be immobilized if insights are genuine and authentic? Mind's nature cannot be found in textbook nor in scriptures; in a moment of right condition, a chirping bird can also open one's wisdom eye. That is what you lack most now and a good training ground for u."

"Bodhidharma's Bloodstream Sermon
- taken from The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma translated by Red Pine (1987)
Bodhidharma (440-528)

Everything that appears in the three realms leads back to the mind. Hence, buddhas of the past and future teach mind to mind without bothering about definitions.

But if they don't define it, what do they mean by mind? You ask.

That's your mind. I answer. That's my mind. If I had no mind, how could I answer? If you had no mind, how could you ask? That which asks is your mind. Through endless kalpas without beginning, whatever you do, wherever you are, that's your real mind, that's your real buddha.

This mind is the buddha says the same thing. Beyond this mind you'll never find another buddha. To search for enlightenment or nirvana beyond this mind is impossible. The reality of your own self-nature, the absence of cause and effect, is what's meant by mind. Your mind is nirvana. You might think you can find a buddha or enlightenment somewhere beyond the mind, but such a place doesn't exist.

Trying to find a buddha or enlightenment is like trying to grab space. Space has a name but no form. It's not something you can pick up or put down. And you certainly can't grab it. Beyond this mind you'll never see a buddha. The buddha is a product of your mind. Why look for a buddha beyond this mind?

Buddhas of the past and future only talk about this mind. The mind is the buddha. And the buddha is the mind. Beyond the mind there's no buddha. And beyond the buddha there's no mind. If you think there's a buddha beyond the mind, where is he? There's no buddha beyond the mind, so why envision one? You can't know your real mind as long as you deceive yourself. As long as you're enthralled by a lifeless form, you're not free. If you don't believe me, deceiving yourself doesn't help. It's not the buddha's fault. People, though, are deluded. They're unaware that their own mind is the buddha. Otherwise, they wouldn't look for a buddha outside the mind.

Buddhas don't save buddhas. If you use your mind to look for a buddha, you won't see the buddha. As long as you look for a buddha somewhere else, you'll never see that your own mind is the buddha. And don't use a buddha to worship a buddha. And don't use the mind to invoke a buddha. Buddhas don't recite sutras. Buddhas don't keep precepts. And buddhas don't break precepts. Buddhas don't keep or break anything. Buddhas don't do good or evil.

To find a buddha, you have to see your nature. Whoever sees his or her nature is a buddha. If you don't see your nature, invoking buddhas, reciting sutras, making offerings and keeping precepts are all useless. Invoking buddhas results in good karma. Reciting sutras results in good memory. Keeping precepts results in a good rebirth. And making offerings results in future blessings. But no buddha.

Long ago, the monk Good Star was able to recite the entire Canon. But he didn't escape the Wheel because he didn't see his nature. If this was the case for Good Star, then people nowadays who recite a few sutras or shastras and think it's the Dharma are fools. Unless you see your mind, reciting so much prose is useless.

To find a buddha, all you have to do is see your nature. Your nature is the buddha. And the buddha is the person who's free, free of plans, free of cares. If you don't see your nature and run around all day looking somewhere else, you'll never find a buddha. The truth is there's nothing to find. Life and death are important. Don't suffer them in

vain. There's no advantage in deceiving yourself. Even if you have mountains of jewels and as many servants as there are grains of sand along the Ganges, you see them when your eyes are open. But what about when your eyes are shut? You should realize that everything you see is like a dream or illusion.

Buddha is Sanskrit for what you call aware, miraculously aware. Responding, perceiving, arching your brows, blinking your eyes, moving your hands and feet, it's all your miraculously aware nature. And this nature is the mind. And the mind is the buddha. And the buddha is the path. And the path is zen. But the word zen is one that remains a puzzle to both mortals and sages. Seeing your nature is zen. Unless you see your nature, it's not zen.

Bodhidharma (440-528)

Excerpted from The Zen Teaching of Bodhidharma translated by Red Pine (1987)"

“Even though you have realized that your mind is the Buddha, don’t forsake your master! Even though you have realized appearances to be mind, don’t interrupt conditioned roots of virtue! Even though you don’t hope for Buddhahood, honor the sublime Three Jewels! Even though you don’t fear samsara, avoid even the minutest misdeed! Even though you have gained the unchanging confidence of your innate nature, don’t belittle any spiritual teaching! Even though you experience the qualities of samadhi, higher perceptions and the like, give up conceit and pretentiousness! Even though you have realized that samsara and nirvana are nondual, don’t cease to have compassion for sentient beings!”

~ Advice from the Lotus-born: A Collection of Padmasambhava's Advice to the Dakini Yeshe Tsogyal and Other Close Disciples from the Terma Treasure Revelations of Nyang Ral Nyima Özer, Guru Chöwang, Pema Ledrel Tsal, Sangye Lingpa, Rigdzin Gódem, & Chokgyur Lingpa

“-- There are some who show they are weary (or fatigued) about practicing something profound (like Dzogchen); they say that all phenomena are primordially liberated; they argue that they (themselves) are naturally liberated, and being carried away by these numerous reasons (or quotes), they do not practice (formally) and thus signs of success do not arise, nor (liberating) experiences. They say they are (already) Buddhas and don’t practice virtues; they are those who don’t give up vices. These are people (advocating) a nihilist view (chad par lta ba rnams).” - Dampa Deshek an early Nyingma master of Sems-sde | *The General Outline of the Great Perfection, rDzogs chen spyi chings, p. 718-719*

"Some say: 'Cause and effect, compassion and merits are the dharma for ordinary people, and it will not lead to enlightenment. O great yogis! You should meditate upon the ultimate meaning, effortless as space.'

These kinds of statements are the views of the utmost nihilism, they have entered the path of the most inferior. It is astonishing to expect the result while abandoning the cause."

- Dzogchen master Longchenpa

“Buddhism accounts for ethics in the context of the ten natural nonvirtues, which it considers the core frame around which all secular and religious morals and ethics are constructed.

Most of these morals and ethics involve various interpretations of the constraints upon persons these ten natural nonvirtues impose upon our personal conduct.” – Lopon Malcolm, 2020

Sam Roff asked a question.
https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/permalink/5690870290954354/?__cft__[0]=AZVC8d0903ox090ngUEOcxS45eeFQYUUsUlxw7rta32K3OrcY4OLDpLeoDzRmL2E2SDFlsonnF5WxCMJ1N74blVXPReKG-9EPkx2jHKPKgKA0WNfuTGvrl_OJvzQdZt93WeOJ7xXfm_mVqVcBu9p5bLt2_t0OTnLicQRt83JEUhhd9w5tsyPtNJ4p3EVkefHfD4&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R

· tit2Sdpoo3nsorehd ·
My friends,
What pitfalls should one look out for when upgrading the Character on the relative plane (Fundamental morality, good habits, financial awareness, health and fitness, starting a company ect) while Awakening to True Nature as a householder?
Perhaps frequent considerations/prompts one should consider that aren't often discussed in the conventional hustle mindset of the West.
Curious to get the ATR communities opinion/perhaps personal experience/pitfalls they've run into while pursuing self improvement in adjunct to awakening.
Here's my stream of consciousness and take on it. Feel free to fill in any gaps and comment on any oversights, pretty pls.

***
As a householder the relative plane is important and should not be neglected. Like a video game character that is seen as empty with progressively deepening understanding, it is a good idea to make the character a good one. Looking after our families, adopting responsibility, contributing to our community ect.
Additionally, upgrading the character also tends to result in more positive emotion as one is engaged with the world. Sila in Buddhism per say. This assists the process of awakening as Samadhi/unification of mind is more available to assist inquiry practice because the soil for insight is more fertile.
There is a shadow to this of course. We run the risk of re-ifying the small self. 'I'm getting better!' - but whom is getting better? We may also overwork and overlook what is already here. Self improving in order to acquire an external source of happiness. Like a carrot on a stick leading us from one goal to the next, we might yearn for external achievement while failing to inquire whom is actually holding the stick in the first place and see freedom is already apparent (thanks Angello DiLullo for this analogy). Perhaps subconsciously seeking status, for example. This reification might work in very subtle ways causing significant suffering until awakening is fully realized and everything is consistently seen as IT.

The process of realization makes these subtle reifications of self clearer to see. Unskillful motives(perhaps through wounding/cultural drives/beliefs) toward leveling up the character are seen as thoughts, are illuminated and seen to be empty. Frequently inquiring toward ones motivates in active reflection and inquiring even beyond this may help tremendously here.
Curious what ATR thinks/has anything to add! ❤️

Soh Wei Yu
Admin

The spiritual path is all about totally obliterating all delusions and sense of self/Self and later the subtle knowledge obscurations. For that you need to realise, and if you haven't realise then take steps to realisation, then after realisation there is usually still ongoing practice and two obscurations that are gradually eliminated. Anything that supports that path or at least does not detract one from that, will be supportive. Examples of actions that would not be supportive would be the ten nonvirtues*, or any acts that harms oneself and/or others, disturbs the mind, causes guilt and other unwholesome mental factors which can obscure the clarity and stability of one's mind. The ten unwholesome or nonvirtuous actions themselves arise out of afflictions and self-grasping.
None of those actions you mentioned, in and of themselves, are necessities nor hindrances for awakening but are individual specific. Nobody can tell you what you must do, it must come from one's own intuitive awareness. For example taking responsibility for family - what about monks? Monks don't need to take responsibility for family (other than perhaps in some ways like teaching dharma and so on), but many monks are awakened. But as a lay person if you have a family, then taking responsibility for family is also not in and of itself an obstacle, but what is appropriate for you. Engagement in activity is not necessarily an obstacle, in fact, when one is actualizing anatta, one is fully engaged in a non-dual manner, from sound and sight and smell and taste and touch and thought... to full engagement in action where the whole universe is exerting in that action/activity. One is only not engaged in the moment of action if there is a sense of self, dissociating, withdrawing, contracting away from the moment of experience or action. Dissociation is the result of sense of self and grasping, thus a cause of suffering. But at the same time if one is attached or grasping while engaging, then one is appropriating things in terms of I, me, and mine, then it becomes an obstacle and a cause for suffering as well. So, the key and quality of spiritual practices does not always lie in 'what' you are doing/not-doing, but more in terms of the quality of how you are relating or experiencing that moment, and more fundamentally whether one is operating from ignorance or wisdom/gnosis.
There is also the teaching of non-action, wu wei, or wei wu wei -- actionless action. In actionless action, the gap between actor and action is refined till none. As John Tan puts it in 2012, "When the gap between actor and action is refined till none, that is non-action and that non-action is total action. Whether this total action is understood as the natural way will depend on whether the insight of anatta has arisen. Anatta is the insight that allows the practitioner to see clearly that this has always been the case." - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/.../total-exertion_20.html
Besides the refining the gap of actor and action till none, there are also the qualities of 'action without seeking results', behaving without hopes and fears. Almost like you are doing something for the sake of just doing something, rather

than a result in the future. There can moments of planning, a goal, but in that moment of executing there is no attachment to all these, just pure action. And one is not attached to an expected result or outcome either. The means becomes an end to itself. As John Tan said, in his business career, he had to deal with a lot of these, and the key is completely relinquishing all grasping at 'gain' and 'loss' into non-action. This is also a key to non-action and liberation. The relinquishment of grasping towards the eight worldly winds: Gain, loss, status, disgrace, censure, praise, pleasure, & pain https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/AN/AN8_6.html

Now I speak as if spirituality is only totally 'self immolating' or 'self relinquishment' as if it is a complete opposite of 'self improvement'. That is also not necessarily the case. Improvement is always happening and is usually something positive, but while actualizing it comes from the flow of the total exertion. Like you learn and become good at singing by the full engagement of singing, you learn and become good at tennis by the full engagement of playing tennis. The learning does not come from a 'self' trying to 'know' or 'grasp' or 'learn' or 'become better' at something. Simply let the full engagement of whole body-mind-universe totally exerting itself, improve itself by itself and just lose yourself in that whole process without even grasping or seeking for an outcome, that whole 'self' construct is unnecessary and extra. Then actions can be self-liberated. Otherwise, all actions just become worldly karma or actions, karmic activities, that leave traces resulting and ripening in good and bad experiences in samsara but no liberation.

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□ Soh Wei Yu

Admin

“When anatta matures, one is fully and completely integrated into whatever arises till there is no difference and no distinction.
When sound arises, fully and completely embraced with sound yet non-attached. Similarly, in life we must be fully engaged yet non-attached” - John Tan/Thusness
"If you are attached to this life, you are not a true spiritual practitioner.
If you are attached to samsara, you do not have renunciation.
If you are attached to your own self-interest, you have no bodhichitta.
If there is grasping, you do not have the View.”" - Parting from the Four Attachments (Tib. ཞེན་པ་བཞི་བྲལ་, shyenpa shyidral, Wyl. zhen pa bzhi bral) — a short teaching spoken by Manjushri to the Sakya patriarch Sachen Kunga Nyingpo.
""(9:53 PM) AEN: but whats the difference between the two articles
(9:54 PM) Thusness: the analogy is something like this. the first one is like dealing with existing karma but only the realisation not really right but there is not much danger of creating more unnecessary karma. the 2nd one is not only creating extra karma but deal with it wrongly and creates more karma. like an endless loop
(9:56 PM) AEN: huh how come? so I should post the other one instead? lol
(9:57 PM) Thusness: like teacher C he is in the midst of retreating. due to some reasons and he is clearly not accumulating anything extra. she should retire when the time is right and practice hard. it is not easy to go through engagement and yet want to realise self-liberation this way. it is all thoughts. this is not self-liberation. so b4 the true realisation of self-liberation, it is best to lessen these activities though we still can be a lay...but lessen these activities. until correct realisation is attained, and continue to refine the experience, then dirty urself in the mud later. means self-liberation aspect is seen, one can dirty himself. but not kept dirtying oneself unknowingly. if she understood by six paramitas in daily life, then that is better. and more applicable. like ren ru (patience). just practice hard.” - a warning or note of caution by John Tan in 2007
*The Buddha taught:
“The Wholesome and the Unwholesome
3. "When, friends, a noble disciple understands the unwholesome, the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome, and the root of the wholesome, in that way he is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma, and has arrived at this true Dhamma.
4. "And what, friends, is the unwholesome, what is the root of the unwholesome, what is the wholesome, what is the root of the wholesome? Killing living beings is unwholesome; taking what is not given is unwholesome; misconduct in sensual pleasures is unwholesome; false speech is unwholesome; malicious speech is unwholesome; harsh speech is unwholesome; gossip is unwholesome; covetousness is unwholesome; ill will is unwholesome; wrong view is unwholesome. This is called the unwholesome.
5. "And what is the root of the unwholesome? Greed is a root of the unwholesome; hate is a root of the unwholesome; delusion is a root of the unwholesome. This is called the root of the unwholesome.
6. "And what is the wholesome? Abstention from killing living beings is wholesome; abstention from taking what is not given is wholesome; abstention from misconduct in sensual pleasures is wholesome; abstention from false speech is wholesome; abstention from malicious speech is wholesome; abstention from harsh speech is wholesome; abstention

from gossip is wholesome; non-covetousness is wholesome; non-ill will is wholesome; right view is wholesome. This is called the wholesome.
7. "And what is the root of the wholesome? Non-greed is a root of the wholesome; non-hate is a root of the wholesome; non-delusion is a root of the wholesome. This is called the root of the wholesome.
8. "When a noble disciple has thus understood the unwholesome, the root of the unwholesome, the wholesome, and the root of the wholesome, he entirely abandons the underlying tendency to lust, he abolishes the underlying tendency to aversion, he extirpates the underlying tendency to the view and conceit 'I am,' and by abandoning ignorance and arousing true knowledge he here and now makes an end of suffering. In that way too a noble disciple is one of right view, whose view is straight, who has perfect confidence in the Dhamma and has arrived at this true Dhamma."" - https://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.009.ntbb.html

Sam Roff
Author

Soh Wei Yu Wow, a lot to swallow here. Thank you for this immensely rich response! Wue Wei.

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□ Sam Roff
Author

'So, the key and quality of spiritual practices does not always lie in 'what' you are doing/not-doing, but more in terms of the quality of how you are relating or experiencing that moment, and more fundamentally whether one is operating from ignorance or wisdom/gnosis.'
This stood out to me most.

1

- □ □ ·□ Soh Wei Yu

Admin

Actualizing is only the natural way after insight into anatta as 'always already so', but before that one can still practice non-action and letting go gain/loss, hopes/fears, the paramitas and so on. These will help lessen and dissolve the sense of self in activities. Then take steps to give rise to the correct realisations. At some point, the insights are naturally actualized in daily living.
“Soh Wei YuSunday, April 21, 2013 at 11:38pm UTC+10
facing all kinds of stuff in life and yet experiencing the three characteristics of self-liberation like you said, "non-duality, non-attachment and fearlessness" is how I understand dong zhong xiu (practice amidst movement) now
John TanSunday, April 21, 2013 at 11:39pm UTC+10
yes but with the direct and intuitive knowledge that there is no you facing anything, it is the entire universe facing it. it is like all the phases of your insights actualized in this conventional world.
means when say talking to my children, it is neither me nor him... it is one activity
like I talk to you, it does not mean that soh does not exist.

it is just no thusness or soh, only the question on hand that makes up the situation... or when you talking to your teacher, no teacher or student relationship... just a single activity... get it?
teacher is not teacher, student not student... teacher becomes the student, the student becomes the teacher, the teacher is the teacher, the student is the student, no teacher, no student...all as one activity...
everything interpenetrates, everything interdefines, there is no everything... when eyes are open.. .the spontaneous presence of scenery... no seer, no seeing, no seen... seer is the seeing is the seen... just this, the entire movement.
this must be your moment to moment encounter in mundane activity.
deconstruct self, deconstruct physical, deconstruct external, deconstruct internal... be free from all arbitrary definitions and stories... then whatever experience is neither physical nor mental nor spiritual... just direct, non-conceptual as it is state of self arising... be free from all arbitrary thoughts and definitions... don't let 'yourself' be troubled by all these so that this activity is unobstructed and uncontrived in clean purity... then experience will be transparent and total."
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"To study Buddhism, it is first necessary to clarify cause and effect. If one ignores cause and effect one will develop false views and sever the roots of goodness. The principle of cause and effect is very clear and there is no "I" in it: those who create evil will fall and those who practice good will rise, without a hairsbreadth of disparity between the two. If cause and effect had perished and ceased to be, then the buddhas would not have appeared in the world, the founding teacher would not have come from the West, and sentient beings would never have met the Buddha and heard the Dharma. People like Confucius or Lao-tse do not propound the principle of cause and effect. Only the buddhas and Zen ancestors have made this clear." – A quote of Zen Master Dogen in Yamada, Kōun. Zen: The Authentic Gate (p. 149). Wisdom Publications. Kindle Edition."

"To summarize, the principle of cause and effect is quite clear, and it is totally impersonal: those who fabricate evil will fall into a lower state, whereas those who practice good will rise to a higher state, and without the slightest disparity. If cause and effect had become null and void, Buddhas would never have appeared in the world and our Ancestral Master would not have come from the West. In short, it would be impossible for human beings to encounter a Buddha and hear the Dharma. The fundamental principle of cause and effect was not clear to Confucius or Lao-tzu. It has only been clarified and Transmitted by Buddha after Buddha and by Ancestor after Ancestor. Because the good fortune of those who are seeking to learn in these degenerate days of the Dharma is scant, they do not encounter a genuine Master or hear the authentic Dharma, and so they are not clear about cause and effect. If you deny causality as a result of this error, you will experience excessive misfortune, since you would be as ignorant as an ox or a horse. Even if you have not committed any evil act other than denying cause and effect, the poison of this view will immediately be terrible. Therefore, if you who are exploring the Matter through your training with a Master have put your heart that seeks awakening as the first and foremost matter, and therefore wish to repay the vast benevolence of the Buddhas and the Ancestors, you should swiftly clarify what causality really is." - Zen Master Dogen, https://www.thezensite.com/ZenTeachings/Dogen_Teachings/Shobogenzo/088jinshiInga.pdf

"Without the precepts, Zen is the work of the devil

— Dogen Zenji”

On the importance of merits, something I wrote before like a decade ago:

"I remember years ago Thusness would have me explain the dharma to people from various forums. One time many years ago I thought it would be better if Thusness explained by himself to the others, so I told Thusness why don't you post yourself or something like that. Thusness suddenly appeared serious (he seldom talk in this tone) and asked me so are you going to do this or not? Then he told me the reason (not exact words now but along this line) he had me to do this was because I was lacking in merits to gain enlightenment. And then he said something like... you think I'm joking? Suddenly at that moment I realized why he was always taking the trouble and instructing me to do all those things... when he could have done it himself.

Not long later I had a meditation experience... he informed me it is due to my merits ripening due to a particular instance of explaining the dharma to someone some time ago. He informed me there is a direct causal relation. When asked how does he know that merits is important for experience and realization, he simply says this is his experience. He says it may not make a lot of sense to a dualistic mind, but this is how it (dependent origination) works.

Today he no longer makes me explain this and that to others, since I am in a much better position to explain myself based on my insight and experience. But even today he said one of the reasons that contributed to my quick progression of insight is the merits accrued by actively participating in Dharma discussions... apart from the practice and establishment of right view."

Even my breakthrough last year was the result of my actively engaging in contemplating and writing the AtR guide. It is all intimately connected.

“The concept of ethics - even the word “ethics” itself - has an unpleasant connotation for many people. It brings up images of overbearing, dogmatic, and abusive authority figures. It may bring up memories of personal experience with rules and laws, manipulation, threats, fears, and physical punishment. Some people who grow up with dogmatic ethics end up feeling a lifelong aversion to the very idea of ethics.

In fact, many people have moved from traditional Western religions to modern non-dual paths partly because of the freedom from dogmatic ethics they perceive in non-dualism. Non-dualism is free from the intolerant moralistic heaviness that can accompany traditional religions.

But ethics has also been taught in a generous, loving, heart-centered way, even in traditional Western religions. This chapter is about heart-centered ethics. Examples are the teachings communicated by Christian gospel music and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37); by Buddhist metta meditations; and by the selfless service tradition of seva in Hinduism, in which others are seen as manifestations of divinity or global awareness and in which our actions

should manifest ahimsa (the absence of harm). Each of these examples teaches love in an inspiring, heart-opening, non-punitive way. In fact, for the rest of this chapter, if I use the word 'ethics,' I'm usually referring to heart-centered ethics.

I would like to encourage those who articulate non-dual teachings, including myself, to incorporate an emphasis on heart-centered ethics.

There are many different systems of ethics. In this book, I'm not arguing for one specific ethical system among others. Rather, my point is that non-dual teachings should include some emphasis on ethical teachings, rather than omitting or rejecting ethics altogether.

Why Ethics?

Why am I in favor of including rather than excluding ethics? My preferences are based on my own experiences, as well as on respect for the traditional paths upon which most non-dual teachings are based. I have two fundamental reasons to prefer that ethics be a part of non-dual teachings. One is that, years before I ever encountered non-dual teachings, learning to care for others made me happier, kinder, and more peaceful. Of course, receiving heart-centered ethics teachings is no guarantee that a person will be happier or kinder. But I think the odds favor it.

The other reason that I advocate for ethics to be part of non-dual teachings is that non-dual insight seems to come a lot more readily when enabled by an open heart. The discoveries are deeper and more lasting. Heart-centered ethics teachings, when put into use, open the heart and reduce the felt insistence that everything should be about oneself. This opening assists in the exact kind of inquiry used in the direct path. I expand upon both these reasons below.

I can't lay down a prescription for a particular brand of heart-centered ethics teaching, but I can say that these teachings helped me become happier. They have also helped me discover for myself the insights spoken of in non-dual teachings...

...it occured to me, based on my experience in various spiritual paths, that paths actually need some sort of heart-centered ethical teaching. I felt that paths need ethics to help with two related goals that paths usually have. One goal is to articulate a vision of how life should be lived. The other goal is to inspire students to work toward that vision. Even if the vision is something vague like 'live in a free, enlightened way,' I thought my chances of freedom and enlightenment would be much better if the path also had an ethical component.

It seemed that the ethical components of these paths weren't a side issue. The ethical component seemed intrinsically necessary to each path's spiritual goals.

There are some specific examples of the spiritual benefits of ethical teachings. In my time with various Rosicrucian groups, I noticed an emphasis on loving one's neighbor. In the Zen temple I attended most frequently, there was a lot of emphasis on compassion and deferring to others. Compassion and deference were enacted in many concrete ways. In the traditional Advaita Vedanta school where I took weekly classes for several years, there was an emphasis on treating

all beings as a manifestations of the highest deity. Sometimes the teaching would advise us to treat all women as we would treat our own mother and to treat all men as we would treat our own father. In Tibetan Madhyamika Buddhism, I noticed a constant emphasis on putting compassion (defined as the altruistic aspiration to achieve the highest enlightenment for the sake of all beings) into practice by making vows and by developing generosity, discipline, patience, perseverance, meditative concentration, and wisdom. Thanks to the heart-centered ethics component of each of these paths, my self-concern softened; I adopted a more engaged, concrete, benevolent way of interacting with people; and I experienced a warm, expansive joy. I only hope that, as a result of these changes in me, people found me more pleasant to be around!" ~ Greg Goode, After Awareness

In the Pali Canon, the Buddha taught that morality/conduct is not the goal of the path, however, it has an important role and purpose in the path. Here's what he said,

"*An Act of Will*
Cetanā Sutta (AN 11:2)
NAVIGATIONSuttas/AN/11:2

"For a person endowed with virtue, consummate in virtue, there is no need for an act of will, 'May freedom from remorse arise in me.' It is in the nature of things that freedom from remorse arises in a person endowed with virtue, consummate in virtue.

"For a person free from remorse, there is no need for an act of will, 'May joy arise in me.' It is in the nature of things that joy arises in a person free from remorse.

"For a joyful person, there is no need for an act of will, 'May rapture arise in me.' It is in the nature of things that rapture arises in a joyful person.

"For a rapturous person, there is no need for an act of will, 'May my body be calm.' It is in the nature of things that a rapturous person grows calm in body.

"For a person calm in body, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I experience pleasure.' It is in the nature of things that a person calm in body experiences pleasure.

"For a person experiencing pleasure, there is no need for an act of will, 'May my mind grow concentrated.' It is in the nature of things that the mind of a person experiencing pleasure grows concentrated.

"For a person whose mind is concentrated, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I know & see things as they have come to be.' It is in the nature of things that a person whose mind is concentrated knows & sees things as they have come to be.

"For a person who knows & sees things as they have come to be, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I feel disenchantment.' It is in the nature of things that a person who knows & sees things as they have come to be feels disenchantment.

"For a person who feels disenchantment, there is no need for an act of will, 'May I grow dispassionate.' It is in the nature of things that a person who feels disenchantment grows dispassionate.

“For a dispassionate person, there is no need for an act of will, ‘May I realize the knowledge & vision of release.’ It is in the nature of things that a dispassionate person realizes the knowledge & vision of release.

“In this way, dispassion has knowledge & vision of release as its purpose, knowledge & vision of release as its reward. Disenchantment has dispassion as its purpose, dispassion as its reward. Knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be has disenchantment as its purpose, disenchantment as its reward. Concentration has knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be as its purpose, knowledge & vision of things as they have come to be as its reward. Pleasure has concentration as its purpose, concentration as its reward. Calm has pleasure as its purpose, pleasure as its reward. Rapture has calm as its purpose, calm as its reward. Joy has rapture as its purpose, rapture as its reward. Freedom from remorse has joy as its purpose, joy as its reward. Skillful virtues have freedom from remorse as their purpose, freedom from remorse as their reward.

“In this way, mental qualities lead on to mental qualities, mental qualities bring mental qualities to their consummation, for the sake of going from the near to the Further Shore.””

“The Narayana-Requested Sutra says:

One should not keep moral ethics to attain a kingdom, not for higher realms, not for Indra or Brahma states, not for wealth, not for the Ishwara state, not for the body. Likewise, one should not protect moral ethics by fearing rebirth in the hell realms. Likewise, the birth of animals. Nor should one protect moral ethics by fearing rebirth in the world of Yama.

On the other hand, one should keep moral ethics to establish sentient beings in Buddhahood. One should protect moral ethics to benefit and bring happiness to all sentient beings.

~ pg 197 - 198, The Jewel Ornament of Liberation by Gampopa, translated by Khenchen Konchog Gyaltsen Rinpoche”

“Krodha (Kyle Dixon) posted in Reddit:

https://www.reddit.com/r/Buddhism/comments/ah8zes/jigme_lingpa_how_every_action_of_life_can_be/

Posted byu/krodha

1 month ago

Jigme Lingpa: How Every Action of Life Can Be Turned into Another Step Towards Awakening

"Any virtuous action that is filled with loving-kindness and compassion:

Is generosity (dāna) when it is done for the sake of beings.

It is discipline (śīla) when it is free from self-interest.

It is patience (kshānti) when it is done untiringly for the sake of others.

It is heroic perseverance (vīrya) when it is done with vibrant joy.

It is meditation (dhyāna) when it is done with one-pointed mind.

It is wisdom (prajñā) when there is no clinging to it as real.

The six perfections are never separate from such virtuous actions."

- Vidyadhara Jigme Lingpa, The yogi of the sky-like vast expanse (from The Treasury of Precious Qualities)

Commentary from Yogi Prabodha Jñāna:

Everyone has the innate ability to be perfectly awakened and act from the spacious expanse of spontaneous benevolence. However, our habituation to self-clinging and dualistic grasping obscure this ability and make us narrow beings. If these obscurations are removed, the six perfections (pāramitā) are naturally perfected. Conversely, by gradually cultivating the six perfections, these concealments can be transcended. That is the Way of Six Perfections as the path to awakening. As these six are perfected, one's primordially pure nature gradually manifests to perfection as a Buddha, an awakened being.

Cultivating these six perfections are not a separate spiritual project that one needs to perform outside all other activities of life. As Jigme Lingpa says, any virtuous action (i.e., anything that does not harm, but benefits oneself and others) can be performed as the confluence of all the six perfections. Thus, with training, one can turn every action of one's life into another step towards Buddhahood."

"When you do not harbor any stinginess or prejudice whatsoever in your mind, that is the Paramita of Generosity. When you can skillfully relinquish your disturbing emotions, that is the Paramita of Discipline. When you are totally free from anger and resentment, that is the Paramita of Patience. When you are neither lazy nor indolent, that is the Paramita of Diligence. When you are free from distraction and attachment to the taste of meditation, that is the Paramita of Concentration. When you are utterly free from constructed concepts, that is the Paramita of Wisdom."

- Padmasambhava

[1:12 PM, 9/30/2020] John Tan: Tell me, what are 3 the most important concepts in practice you always hear about taoism. Don't tell me you don't know. It is everywhere.

[1:41 PM, 9/30/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Dao, ziran, wuwei?

[1:42 PM, 9/30/2020] John Tan: Good.

[1:42 PM, 9/30/2020] John Tan: What do you think is wu-wei?

[1:44 PM, 9/30/2020] John Tan: Many has all sort of fantasy explanations, in real practice, what is it? In real practice, when engaging in an unfamiliar activity, how the agent dissolves?

[11:04 PM, 9/30/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Actually whatever activity as long as one fully enters into the activity actualizing as anatta without distancing or fear then there is no sense of self.. the same goes for all sense perception except when doing one is fully involved in the action with intentions while attuned to the whole environment as well.

Actually at work i am very often facing unfamiliar problems. The key is just instead of being frustrated, just continue doing or solving the issue. Dissolve in the activity

Like i wrote before in fearless samadhi, each time i had sleep paralysis since anatta there is just dissolution into boundless and centerless luminosity and bliss without fear.. even if a sense of intruder appears

[11:12 PM, 9/30/2020] John Tan: At least some improvement but still not good enough. What else beside fear?

[11:42 PM, 9/30/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Dissolving all trace of self by actualizing anatta

[11:43 PM, 9/30/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Beyond subject-action-object

[11:44 PM, 9/30/2020] Soh Wei Yu: The other day i just intuitively understood that tremendous merits and the perfections of paramitas comes from the actualization of anatta in practice and action.. like in generosity etc

[11:45 PM, 9/30/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Beyond or empty of the three spheres

[12:00 AM, 10/1/2020] John Tan: Amt to nothing. Taking question to be the anatta.

[12:00 AM, 10/1/2020] John Tan: Better, what else?

[12:00 AM, 10/1/2020] John Tan: So what do you understand from it?

[12:02 AM, 10/1/2020] John Tan: Paramitas and fear....what have you understood and how is it different from just losing the background?

[12:40 AM, 10/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: If for example one does an act of generosity with a self or giver in mind, a gift in mind and a receiver in mind, or the idea of a self creating merit in mind, then the merits accrued from such an act is very limited and the action can hardly be a perfection.

When one is actualizing anatta in that action of giving with giver, gift and recipient, the action of generosity is naturally perfected and the merits accrued is immense.

Also there is the actual mental qualities to be cultivated but the key is in the state of equipoise or actualization of anatta otherwise the quality cannot be perfected also. For example one can practice a kind of tolerance but this is different from completely dissolving the self in actualization and equipoise, then “patience” and “equanimity” arise untainted by self even when confronted with situations.

Just losing the background can remain an inactive perceptual level but all the paramitas are qualities of mind that are perfected when anatta beyond three spheres are actualised when facing situations and people

Likewise for fear

[12:41 AM, 10/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: *without giver,...

[12:45 AM, 10/1/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Like just chanting..

[12:45 AM, 10/1/2020] John Tan: Much better, but the relationship is still not clear. And it is not so correct to say that if anatta insight doesn't arise, you can't perfect paramitas. In fact it goes both ways.

So the passive and active mode of anatta. How does the gap between the actor and action being eliminated to none in activity?

Penetration of Wisdom into Sleep

Post-anatta, it is possible for the meditative equipoise of anatta to extend into the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep, into "clear light sleep" and "clear light dream", in which the state of sleep dawns as non-dual luminosity/awareness, bliss and transparency without any sense of self, center or boundaries. It is also possible in my (Soh's) experiences, as well as John's experience, to receive teachings from luminous visions of majestic Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, teachers, accurate prophetic visions, and various kinds of helpful dream experiences called "dreams of clarity". These dreams usually contain messages of great profundity that have a very practical implication to one's own practice and life situation. These topics are dealt with in more details in books like Dream Yoga by Andrew Holecek and Stephen LaBerge, The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Mark Dahlby, as well as Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu and Michael Katz (see Book Recommendations).

"You don't need clarity [during sleep] like in conscious state. You only need the strength of insight to penetrate the 3 states (Soh: waking, dreaming, deep sleep)." - John Tan, 2019

"I told both of you *(many years ago)* not to maintain awareness in deep sleep and treat deep sleep as deepest samadhi... ...in sleeping, sleep!" - John Tan, 2014

"Focus on wisdom and letting the strength of insights penetrate the 3 states (Soh: waking, dreaming, deep sleep)." - John Tan, 2019

"Treat this [clear light sleep] as the strength of wisdom manifesting in dreams with and without karmic traces." - John Tan, 2012

By wisdom, John Tan refers to the insight of anatta, dependent origination and emptiness (as in John Tan Stage 5 and 6).

"(5:06:14 PM) Thusness: even in deep dreamless sleep... Your mind/body rhythm, heart beats are affected by this practice. if penetrate anatta deeply...from moment to moment...thoroughly letting go of self and grasping and vivid presence, how is it that such practice will not affect the 3 states?

(5:14:39 PM) AEN: hmm... but in deep dreamless sleep if there is no conscious awareness how can there be an ongoing practice?

(5:16:26 PM) Thusness: the entire movement is not a matter of conscious awareness. the momentum continues...the body, the cells are imprinted too. 😛 much like your deep held attachments. all inter-penetrates. your body can contract unnecessarily. " - Conversation with John Tan, 2010

"When absence is maintained and you are able to sink into bed, and find that perfect restful position, literally fall asleep, then you will wake up as you had fallen asleep; knowing, without question, that the 'practice' had run its course throughout those hours of deep sleep. There's no need to be conscious of it throughout to know that that state of absence had been continuous and uninterrupted. You know, because there is no change in the way you feel from when you fell asleep with where you're at after waking up. It's as if you just blinked." - David Vardy

"In fact after anatta experience and insights, I have so many episodes of energy release, dreams of clarity... I don't consider that as A&P but genuine openings. But those are not the essence. It just made you more diligent in practice." - John Tan, 2018

"...what is sleep to you from the perspective of anatta and dependent origination? Life is the total activity of life. Death is the total activity of death. Sleep is the total activity of sleep. This is the total training and practice. Unless you are leaving trace, it is anatta. So life and death, sleep and practice, breathing in and breathing out... all are same practice, same view, same truth, same fruition." - John Tan, 2014

A facebook conversation in June 2013:

http://dharmaconnectiongroup.blogspot.com/2013/06/lucid-dreaming-dreams-of-clarity-more_22.html

Lucid Dreaming, Dreams Of Clarity & Clear Light Sleep

Soh:

I've had many episodes in the past where I was in conscious lucid dreams, and then the lucid dreams disappeared into pure non-dual Presence, pure knowingness, and it was profoundly blissful. Very very blissful. Samadhi like.

Last night, it was like that again, except the dreams never disappeared - I was walking to my dream toilet in profound bliss and awareness was totally transparent and non-dual - the entire dream toilet surroundings was experienced without subject/object dichotomy, there is no sense of a center or circumference left, only vivid transparency. And it was intensely blissful...
The difference between this and previous experiences is that in previous instances, there was a dissolution into formless pure presence, while this time it is like non-dual clear light is experienced within dreams instead of dissolution of dream.

Just a sharing. I'm not a good practitioner, this sort of thing doesn't occur on a daily basis. I'm sure many are more experienced than I am.

Soh: By the way, not toilet, its bathroom. (In Singapore we use the terms synonymously, lol)

Dannon Flynn: This is the clear light of sleep.

Soh: Found a passage from Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's 'The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep'' book, it is precise in description:

CLEAR LIGHT DREAMS

There is a third type of dream that occurs when one is far along the path, the clear light dream. It arises from the primordial prana in the central channel. The clear light is generally spoken of in the teachings about sleep yoga and indicates a state free from dream, thought, and image, but there is also a clear light dream in which the dreamer remains in the nature of mind. This is not an easy accomplishment; the practitioner must be very stable in non-dual awareness before the clear light dream arises. Gyalshen Milu Samleg, the author of important commentaries on the Mother Tantra, wrote that he practiced consistently for nine years before he began to have clear light dreams.

Developing the capacity for clear light dreams is similar to developing the capacity of abiding in the non-dual presence of rigpa during the day. In the beginning, rigpa and thought seem different, so that in the experience of rigpa there is no thought, and if thought arises we are distracted and lose rigpa. But when stability in rigpa is developed, thought simply arises and dissolves without in the least obscuring rigpa; the practitioner remains in non-dual awareness. These situations are similar to learning to play the drum and bell together in ritual practice: in the beginning we can only do one at a time. If we play the bell, we lose the rhythm of the drum, and vice versa. After we are stable we can play both at the same time.

The clear light dream is not the same as the dream of clarity, which, while arising from deep and relatively pure aspects of the mind and generated from positive karmic traces, still takes place in duality. The clear light dream, while emerging from the karmic traces of the past, does not result in dualistic experience. The practitioner does not reconstitute as an observing subject in relation to the dream as an object, nor as a subject in the world of the dream, but abides wholly integrated with non-dual rigpa.

The differences in the three kinds of dreams may seem subtle. Samsaric dream arises from the individual's karmic traces and emotions, and all content of the dream is formed by those traces and emotions. The dream of clarity includes more objective knowledge, which arises from collective karmic traces and is available to consciousness when it is not entangled in personal karmic traces. The consciousness is then not bound by space and time and personal history, and the dreamer can meet with real beings, receive teachings from real teachers, and find information helpful to others as well as to him or herself.

The clear light dream is not defined by the content of the dream, but is a clear light dream because there is no subjective dreamer or dream ego, nor any self in a dualistic relationship with the dream or the dream content. Although a dream arises, it is an activity of the mind that does not disturb the practitioner's stability in clear light.

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"Although we define sleep as unconsciousness, the darkness and experiential blankness are not the essence of sleep. For the pure awareness that is our basis there is no sleep. When not afflicted with obscurations, dreams, or thoughts, the moving mind dissolves into the nature of mind; then, rather than the sleep of ignorance, clarity, peacefulness, and bliss arise. When we develop the ability to abide in that awareness we find that sleep is luminous. This luminosity is the clear light. It is our true nature.

As explained in previous chapters, dreams arise from karmic traces. I used the analogy of light being projected through film to make movies, where the karmic traces are the photographs, awareness is the light that illuminates them, and the dreams are projected on the base (kunzhi*). Dream yoga develops lucidity in relationship to the dream images. But in sleep yoga there is no film and no projection. Sleep yoga is imageless. The practice is the direct recognition of awareness by awareness, light illuminating itself. It is luminosity without images of any kind. Later, when stability in the clear light is developed, even dream images will not distract the practitioner, and the dream period of sleep will also occur in the clear light. These dreams are then called clear light dreams, which are different than dreams of clarity. In clear light dreams, the clear light is not obscured.

We lose the real sense of the clear light as soon as we conceptualize it or try to imagine it. There is neither subject nor object in the clear light. If there is any identification with a subject, then there is no entry into the clear light. Actually, nothing "enters" the clear light: the clear light is the base recognizing itself. There is neither "you" nor "it." Using dualistic language to describe the non- dual necessarily results in paradox. The only way to know the clear light is to know it directly."

Soh: I have lots of dreams of clarity as well (just had another one yesterday as well)... though they often tell me very helpful information about my practise, sometimes involve receiving teachings from teachers, and sometimes it shows future events which are very accurate, but there is not that sort of non-dual lucidity of clear light to those dreams.

Joel Rosenblum: Thanks for sharing, Soh. I have had the dissolving into pure presence dreams, but not yet the third type you speak of. I have also met with dhamma masters in a few dreams, which is always encouraging. It definitely helps for me to set my intentions and meditate before sleep, and then to wake up very early and repeat.

Albert Hong: Soh I just had a dream where I ended up at some large apartment complex then I was in the center of the apartments which became a large sangha of zen students. All lay folks. I saw grey robes and everyone was doing walking meditation.

It seems there is a certain kind of dream. It may be called lucid but even then. These dreams have a odd quality to them as if they were recollections or a higher order of dreaming.

Either way I was very shocked to find a zen center in a random apartment complex with a huge sangha.

There was a definite feel of being a visitor because they wrote my name down.

Anyways just some thoughts.

Soh: Albert, do you mean you were recalling that sangha through dream? Have you found that zen center in real life?

The last time I dreamt of a zen center, I followed that dream and ended up going to that zen center (for the first time) that very day and saw the exact scene played out in my dream as I mentioned in http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2012/10/total-exertion.html

Awakening to Reality: Total Exertion

Albert Hong: Nope. But I have dreamt places and found them in real life.

Another note i've had about five of these odd dreams. Each time after the dream I feel very refreshed as if I showered and rested well.

But i've never seen this place. The place was very magical or rather unconventional.

Soh: Yes! I woke up very refreshed today as well.

The number of hours of sleep also decrease and you begin the day beaming with energy and radiance. Just as John wrote in 2007:

John: for non-dual experiencer where there is complete letting go of the illusory self, there is tremendous progress and if night they are able to, is there real progress? then they complete the first cycle.

Soh: what do you mean by first cycle

John: almost 'be' in all 3 stages (waking, dream, deep sleep)

Soh: What do you mean by cycles

John: when you have a very deep sleep, what happened next morning?

Soh: very awake?

John: what else?

Soh: mind is clear? dunno

John: continue... right

Soh: the mind becomes less active?

John: awake, clear, fresh, energetic, vibrant. aren't that the seven factors? for a non-dual experiencer, the next day is even so. the intensity is even more fantastic. if this is continuously sustained, will the sleep naturally be shortened? isn't it natural? isn't the seven factors of enlightenment maintained? so know that what is right and correctly discerned. buddha's depth of clarity is unsurpassed. we cannot compare one that has reached that stage of clarity

.....

John: and later stage when meditation is stabilized using non-dual and the door of impermanence, then there will be deep sleep with absolutely no problem but the no. of sleeping hours naturally lessen. and there is no problem like her case. but that is not a problem because of deep rest and sleep and allowing our emptiness to manifest. we will feel radiance bright instead of zoombieness....hehehe

Soh: Just found a passage in 2006 where John described what I experienced. And he is very right in pointing out the vast difference between 1) maintaining a state of witnessing awareness in sleep, which is dualistic, or 2) lucid dream, as compared to 3) non-dual knowing in dream and sleep.

John: the strength in the waking state of total presence is the experience of all physical phenomenon arising as pure awareness. but when in dreams, such experience must sustain. that is instead of the physical appearance of phenomenon arising, it is symbolic appearance of arising as the manifestation of pure awareness. not a form of intellectual knowledge. just like the experience of anatta in waking state, the same experience extended to dreamstate. it is entirely different. it is difficult for me to tell you. when one experience the experience of no-self during waking state, one experience total nothingness and absolute transparency but has no single doubt that all and everything is awareness. means he is completely clear yet totally transparent. in dreams, it is difficult to maintain totally no-self and the symbols as pure awareness. that is very different from being aware in dreams. this is dualistic still in dream state. that experience of anatta in waking state is not being experienced in dream state. this is different from being aware in dreams like an observer. one step higher than lucid dreams, you get what I mean or not?

...

John: and most people mistaken it as maintaining presence and awareness in dreams as in the form of passive witness

...

John: that is maintaining presence. not sustaining the experience of anatta - the total transparency but as everything

Soh: but anatta is also presence isn't it?

John: anatta is the experience of total presence in totally different forms every moment

Soh: then what's the difference between maintain presence and anatta

John: no... anatta is the experience of total presence. manifesting in different forms from moment to moment. It is the experience of total and absolute transparency, without boundary and limit. total vividness and clarity. absolute transparency is difficult to maintain and can only result from increasing loosening of the bond I told you. Not the result of effort. That is why this state must be completely and fully stabilized during waking state. Total transparent awareness is experiencing everything as awareness. and during dreamstate this is the case too. This is very difficult to achieve. Not maintaining wakefulness and a sense of presence during the 3 states.

Tommy McNally: Something similar happened to me a few weeks ago, the dream collapsed consciously revealing what you've described as "formless pure presence". I was totally lucid throughout but there was just an instant where the entire 'thing' literally collapsed, like something out of the movie "Inception", leaving 'something' I can't even describe. Apparently it's possible to realize the Sambhogakaya through the sort of lucidity you describe so it sounds like a really good indicator. Thanks for posting this!
January 25 at 7:37am · Like · 1
Dannon Flynn: Soh, this may be off topic, but "following" dreams like you did is a very interesting practice. Most folks would think that the dream-state and waking life are completely independent of each other, or that only causes in waking life can effect dreams, but not the other way around. When one "follows" dreams like you did one becomes aware that the dream-state and waking life are also completely seamlessly interdependent as well. One sees underlying patterns. It seems as if one can shape one's waking life by manipulating dreams. Or that one can let dreams guide one through waking life, exploring chains of cause and effect in dreams in order to make wise choices. It seems as if dreams can tell the future or see into the future.

Soh: Wrote this in UT:

There was another more recent experience but involving sleep paralysis... you know sometimes in sleep paralysis you may feel a bit frightened and creeped out... or there may be a sense that there are other beings around (called 'the intruder' according to wiki on sleep paralysis). I felt that 'intruder' thing again but this time there was no fear and I gave rise to the

intention to pervade the whole room with its apparent beings with the bright luminosity of mind/awareness. And because I was conscious and kept releasing, there was no fear and instead sleep paralysis turned into bliss and luminosity like the previous experiences, awareness was again experienced as vivid transparency, centerless and borderless, no observer/observed duality just vivid transparency appearing as what appeared to be my dark room surroundings.

Then suddenly a weird white flash of light came, very strong and simultaneously there was this almost frightening BOOM! like a nuclear bomb exploded... very very loud sound. Though shocking there was not really fear in it but a thought arose right then "what the hell happened"... but later on I woke up... I found out later it's not an uncommon thing, think it's called "Exploding head syndrome". Happens in astral travel and sleep paralysis. Incidentally astral travel and sleep paralysis are linked (have experienced OBE in sleep paralysis).

But the main thing is that throughout the whole thing there was no fear and it was blissful... because sleep, or rather sleep paralysis, became clear light.

So from my experience... waking, deep sleep, dream, sleep paralysis can dawn as clear light.

Elsewhere Soh also wrote in 2013 on some of the other examples of dream experiences:

"Yesterday a dream of clarity arose in conjunction with John's visions and meditative experiences (due to karmic links this is not the first time it happened) regarding a drop of water placed in an ocean, upon hearing this phrase in the dream there was an immediate shift where dream dawns as non-dual clear light (without the dream dissolving into formless clear light) which is free from subject/object duality, boundless/oceanic, vividly intense, blissful and exhilarating."

"Before I woke up I dreamt that I was in my mother's car and she was driving me around, and she said something like there is only one sound. This struck me as peculiar, but almost instantly I was led to see how all the sense doors are just one door. Suddenly a shift of perception took place and everything seen and felt is just the whole universe, the whole field of experience as one seamlessly integrated form that is great, marvelous and boundless, without any sense of an observer - there is only just that integrated form vividly happening right there, all happening while I know that it is a dream. It became very blissful. After that I woke up."

To which the dharma teacher Daniel M. Ingram wrote, "the insights of that dream clearly relate to both formations and volumetric field sense integration".

"Fearless Samadhi

Someone asked me to explain the paragraph, "...Lastly what that is 'unborn, pristine and luminous' cannot be "dependent and inseparable from the transient" appears sound only logically but not experientially. It will first seem illogical and unnatural to accept such an idea, but when the tendency to dualify and solidify experience subsides, then

scenery, taste, scent, sound, breathe, the sensation of our feet touching the ground...all arising will help lighten this psychological pain. Therefore fearlessly, unreservedly and completely open to whatever arises."

I wrote:

There can be the false misconception that awareness is inherently existing and distinct from transient experience. This is dualistic and tends to solidify the subject/object structure, the sense that I am I and experience is apart from myself.

In sleep paralysis, for example, there can be a situation where there is deep fear due to the sense of an intruder or some fearful 'other'. But in my experience, if there is recognition of the nondual and empty nature of mind/experience, there is liberation in that very instant.
In my previous four times I had sleep paralysis (and I haven't had any recently), each time the structure of subject/object is dissolved in transparent bliss and boundless clarity. The sense of myself being here facing a fearful 'other' or intruder completely dissolves naturally into boundless bliss and presence even as it arises. I no longer get locked in that fearful situation.

There is complete fearless dissolving into whatever appears, seen, heard, smelled, etc. And you will love to dissolve, to die, in a sense, without resistance, without choosing to be in another situation. This very situation, condition, appearance, whatever it is, is your nature, empty-clarity.

And this is why in the "Tibetan Book of the Dead", there is an emphasis on the recognition of whatever deities - wrathful and peaceful, as simply a display of your own state, your own nature, essence and energy. They are not apart from yourself, so do not fear them, but recognise them as your very Presence." - Soh

"[4/8/19, 8:09:47 AM] John Tan: You told me about your dream the other day about being centerless and speaking to your mum. I think that is very important and precious.
[4/8/19, 12:55:25 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Hmm.. but wasn't very long or intense.. but it's like even in the midst of actions and speaking I was doing in the dream was experienced with a vivid centerless boundless quality
[4/8/19, 1:56:34 PM] John Tan: In the dream but vivid centerless boundless quality isn't strong?
[4/8/19, 1:59:46 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Centerless and boundless but wasn't particularly intense I think. Then I woke up. Some of my previous clear light dreams were more vivid intense to the point of blissful
[4/8/19, 2:01:33 PM] John Tan: Ic. Most of my practices in dreams are intense, in fact more intense than waking. But it is good that it penetrates into the 3 states.
[4/8/19, 2:01:55 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. yeah sleep are usually intense. The tibetans are right to say dream and bardo are 7 times more intense lol. Sleep in general
[4/8/19, 2:03:48 PM] John Tan: Malcolm said bardo practices are for Vajrayana practitioners. For others they will not experience the bardo states.
[4/8/19, 2:33:10 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. what he said was that the visions of bardo, as in the specific Vajrayana deities will not be experienced by normal people. But the bardo being seven times more intense applies for everyone I think. As

in that state it is said that one's consciousness is not restricted by the coarse [bodily] senses and mind or something like that
[4/8/19, 4:20:30 PM] John Tan: Yes."

"(4:14 PM) John: i will tell you when is the condition is right for one to enter into dream and dreamless practice of presence. First is the experience of anatta must be stabilized. So much so that sense of 'self' totally dissolved as it has never existed from beginning. Presence is a transparent thus taking place. Nothing within and without. This must be thorough and stabilized during the waking state. Second, one must be able to meditate for quite a prolong period of time (at least 1.5 hrs and above) with complete stillness of the body, there will come a time that the body
is so still that there is absolutely no burden and one can do away with it. This resulted in a state that the body is no different from sleep, a state of complete rest in meditation posture
(4:19 PM) John: when these 2 conditions are present, the practitioner actually experience sleep during meditation.
(4:20 PM) John: that is, the body is undergoing sleep. How do we know...coz the practitioner will experience the body all the syndromes of sleep (might snore also)...hehe
(4:20 PM) John: but the presence is there. Then he is ready. Ready to enter the dream and dreamless state in meditation. He will experience the bliss and samadhi. :) otherwise, one should keep away. Because it will present more problems when the body is denied the necessary rest, revitalization and recharge when the conditions are there. And a practitioner does not how to recoil and return back to normal. We will know as we can observe whether one is ready through the stillness of meditation posture and the experience of anatta. This is my view. :) Because I know that many masters are not that ready to advise people to enter into those stages, it is better to keep oneself away from getting into such experimentation. It can cause great suffering that even doctors and specialists can't help. :) When one's experience of presence gets more intense, meditation should change to morning and evening. That to me is the best. :) This is especially important for lay practitioner.
(4:26 PM) AEN: why
(4:28 PM) John: because lay practitioner has a lot of other stuff to cope in daily life

(4:28 PM) John: lol"

"Sleep kundalini

A teacher appeared in my sleep yesterday and guided me into clear nondual presence. and as i went into it i felt this presence and state of absorption grew more and more and more intense until the bliss was so incredible that I woke up. and even a while after I woke up I still felt the bliss energy and vibrations going up from bottom to top through the base of my spine up to my nape through my sushumna nadi (central channel). This was slightly different from previous instances where it was more related to something like heart chakra.

Then something somewhat miraculous happened — keep in mind my mind was super awake and blissful after I woke up and although it was 4am I was not in a dreamlike state. I saw my hands glowing with light. At first I thought it was coming from my watch but I checked, I was not wearing one. I sent a description to John Tan and went back to sleep.

Just wanted to share this interesting experience. Today my state of consciousness felt clearer and cleaner." – Soh, 2020

“

Soh Wei Yu By the way when you reach phase 3 then even whether conscious in sleep or not doesn't matter at all. It becomes irrelevant. This is like Nisargadatta. *(See:* Thusness's Comments on Nisargadatta / Stage 3)

John TanWednesday, January 28, 2015 at 12:45pm UTC+08
In deep sleep this is where you Union.
John TanWednesday, January 28, 2015 at 12:45pm UTC+08
Even in advaita this shut down state is also mentioned as the purest state of awareness.
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What they think is one matter, know the difference so that you are not misled is another matter. Read phase 3.

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“Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:08pm UTC+08

Greg Goode Soh, this description according to Advaita would not be something that happens in deep sleep, but in a subtle dream, "I have experienced Clear Light in a dreamless sleep before many times. It was pure presence/beingness and bliss without consciousness of any sort of object (or subject), and no other sensory or mental experiences whatsoever." Note the emphasis on "other .. experiences." So this was itself an experience. According to Advaita, it may seem too uneventful to be a dream, so we like to think of it as deep sleep. Even Ken Wilber has misinterpreted the deep sleep teachings by saying that he had developed a witness that was able to witness deep sleep. But in the Direct Path, deep sleep itself is the witness. It is awareness with no objects whatsoever. So the appearance of clear light, according to those teachings, is sufficient to make it a dream. A helpful one to be sure, but a dream. From the perspective of the Advaita teachings on deep sleep, not even clear light or I AM or any imputation or phenomenon appears, no matter how impressive or subtle. What is instructive about deep sleep is that there is no arising whatsoever, yet awareness ... IS. When we try to look back on deep sleep, (we can't literally look back on it - this is a provisional teaching only), but when we look back at it, we are led to several significant insights: 1. There was no evidence of mind, body or world. 2. Yes I was not absent. That is, I didn't disappear, only to reappear when I woke up. 3. I slept happily. It is taught in the direct path as an alternative to the need to develop nirvikalpa samadhi. Faster and more direct..... 2 minutes ago · Like

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:08pm UTC+08

what do you think about this

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:09pm UTC+08

to me this is like an inferential realization

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:09pm UTC+08

lol

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:09pm UTC+08

and not exactly right since the 'I was not absent' is merely an imputation

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:17pm UTC+08

I agree with what Greg said.

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:17pm UTC+08

i wrote back:

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:17pm UTC+08

To me that is like an inferential understanding. A direct realization that 'Awareness IS' is direct realization... no doubt at all, but pure apprehension of Awareness as the essence of mind... without any inference at all, only a direct non-conceptual certainty. But to see it as changeless Self throughout all states is an imputation and precisely is self-view. It is a 'view' or 'understanding' derived from an inherent view and subtle referencing. As I was telling Jax, I differentiate I AM realization with I AM imputation. I AM imputation is a result of referencing. During my I AM days I also had the view that Awareness is changeless throughout waking, dream and deep sleep. That sort of view is seen through in anatta. As I wrote based on what Thusness wrote back in 2007: http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2007/07/spell-of-karmic-propensities.html ...So when momentum is in action, we cannot help but react with our karmic patterns. If we were to ask, "If you lost your shoe, are you still you?" or "If you lost your hands, do you still exist?". It almost seems certain to say "Yes, of course I am still I." because we always assumed there is a truly existing "Self" experiencing changes. This momentum can continue even after experiences of transcendental Presence, and distorting the experience. Dharma Dan calls this the "fundamental knot of perception"...

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:18pm UTC+08

In fact you must have deep sleep as I told u

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:18pm UTC+08

ic.. but isnt that 'I am still there in deep sleep' a result of inference?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:18pm UTC+08

instead of direct realization?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:18pm UTC+08

its like saying 'if you lost your shoes are you still u'

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:19pm UTC+08

i dont see any difference.. that sort of derived understanding

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:19pm UTC+08

That is because you infer

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:19pm UTC+08

You are not seeing sleep and waking as one

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:20pm UTC+08

i mean this: but when we look back at it, we are led to several significant insights: 1. There was no evidence of mind, body or world. 2. Yes I was not absent. That is, I didn't disappear, only to reappear when I woke up. 3. I slept happily.

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:20pm UTC+08

greg said that

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:20pm UTC+08

isnt that inference?

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:20pm UTC+08

It is like causes and conditions and awareness not understood as front and back of the same palm

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:21pm UTC+08

I do not see Deep sleep as the Awareness itself but the gist is quite the same.

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:22pm UTC+08

i don’t understand you.. what exactly are you agreeing with greg lol

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:23pm UTC+08

isnt greg saying that by inference you see that "I" remains unchanged throughout sleep?

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:23pm UTC+08

Lets say how do you know you will not die the next moment now?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:24pm UTC+08

but i do agree that awareness is not a witness so of course it is not a witness of deep sleep... in deep sleep just deep sleep

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:24pm UTC+08

is this what you mean?

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:24pm UTC+08

Answer me first?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:24pm UTC+08

i can't know for sure i wont die next moment

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:24pm UTC+08

i can only guess

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:25pm UTC+08

How do you know you have to breathe out after you breathe in?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:25pm UTC+08

hmm... this is like a spontaneous reflex..

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:26pm UTC+08

Have you play table tennis before?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:27pm UTC+08

yea

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:27pm UTC+08

Good?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:27pm UTC+08

no not good lol

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:27pm UTC+08

Lol... Ok...there is knowledge being one with the flow

You can say you infer. Then you just missed the point. It is the knowledge that arises from being the flow

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:30pm UTC+08

ic.. so you mean one can have knowledge with regards to deep sleep like that?

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:30pm UTC+08

So deep sleep and waking state to you is a form of inference but for one that is in the flow...there are an inseparable whole phase

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:31pm UTC+08

So from the freeness and clarity they understand deep sleep

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:31pm UTC+08

Greg Goode Soh, what post are you answering here? Deep sleep? "But to see it as changeless Self throughout all states is an imputation and precisely is self-view. " It is not at all like this in Advaita. The states are themselves deconstructed. In direct experience one finds nothing other than awareness. And even that is not found like we find a penny on the floor. Not objectively, but in a mystical combination of knowing and being. Of course anatta is going to differ from this!!!!! No surprise. It differs from anatta too.

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:31pm UTC+08

oic..

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:31pm UTC+08

u mean is like from the after effects of sleep?

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:32pm UTC+08

Yes but you are seeing it as an after effect using thought

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:33pm UTC+08

Just like for some ancient tribe life, death and afterlife are one seamless whole...so it means something very different

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:34pm UTC+08

To them it is like walking out to your dad's room

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:35pm UTC+08

But because your mind sees it as something very distinct you see it differently

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:36pm UTC+08

For awareness practice, awareness is maintained throughout. That is the state free of object and that is what it is supposed to b.

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:37pm UTC+08

Awareness with object in the waking state is non-dual and objectless is supposed to be just like deep sleep. Get it?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:37pm UTC+08

ic.. but is what greg said deriving understanding from being one with the flow? i wonder if he's just inferring a changeless self

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:37pm UTC+08

also greg isnt saying awareness has to be maintained

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:37pm UTC+08

in fact he is saying from this understanding, you no longer need to maintain awareness

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:37pm UTC+08

or maintain samadhi or practice awareness in sleep

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:37pm UTC+08

bcos you realize deep sleep is already awareness

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:37pm UTC+08

Not about maintaining. Anyway nvm... You can get the gist that is enough. If you don't understand even after explaining then it becomes a form of useless argument. Greg is telling you something important in advaita

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:40pm UTC+08

It is the same thing gist if I tell you from the perspective of anatta

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:42pm UTC+08

so you mean what greg is saying is that waking deep sleep is an inseparable whole? as awareness

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:44pm UTC+08

Yes. Just like what is sleep to you from the perspective of anatta and DO?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:45pm UTC+08

an activity.. process/flow..

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:45pm UTC+08

Meaning?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:46pm UTC+08

means like its the experience being exerted with every conditions that led to it. like you said playing table tennis or breathing

John TanFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:49pm UTC+08

Life is the total activity of life. Death is the total activity of death. Sleep is the total activity of sleep. This is the total training and practice. How is one to know he is on the right track in practice?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:52pm UTC+08

total transcendence of self in total activity? How different is it from anatta?

Soh Wei YuFriday, February 14, 2014 at 11:55pm UTC+08

in anatta its just pure sensations.. in total exertion its like you see the whole process activity self-arising seamlessly.. breathing is not just breathing but the whole body and environment etc

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:04am UTC+08

What I am saying is unless you are leaving trace, it is anatta. So life and death, sleep and practice, breathing in and breathing out...all are same practice, same view, same truth, same fruition. Therefore non-dual awareness in objectless state is just as what Greg said...like in deep sleep

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:09am UTC+08

i see..

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:10am UTC+08

Once it becomes an integrated practice then it becomes seamless. Just like if you practice anatta throughout the 3 states it is different...get it. When you do not oscillate between inherent and anatta state, then it is seamless in the 3 states ... Equality

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:13am UTC+08

ic.. hmm now i think greg is saying is that everything is awareness... so there is no need to maintain a state treated as awareness in sleep.. as the sleep itself is nondual awareness

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:13am UTC+08

Yes. Objectless state is just like that...no maintenance. In fact that is how I practice. In the past before I enter into Buddhism. Mind agree with what Greg said about Ken Wilber. And I think we discussed this before...when longchen asked about it...

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:16am UTC+08

mind agree ? isit

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:17am UTC+08

I told both of you not to maintain awareness in deep sleep and treat deep sleep as deepest samadhi...if I am not wrong

oic..

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:18am UTC+08

Because Simpo think what Ken Wilber said is true but I told him not to practice that way...

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:18am UTC+08

But forgotten...lol too long

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:19am UTC+08

I think you replied longchen saying that I said that...like in sleeping, sleep! But too long already

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:21am UTC+08

searching now :P

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:21am UTC+08

Or was it someone else? Lol

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:21am UTC+08

jonls right

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:22am UTC+08

I thought it was Simpo? you can't rem?

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:23am UTC+08

Originally posted by JonLS: An innocent mind In the sense of original innocence and original sin, an innocent mind is one which is quiescent (quiet, still, surrendered). This means that the mind is no longer searching for it's true nature. It is no longer making efforts to "know" or "understand" something. Instead, there is resting in one's true nature, in being. This is about letting go of the need to know. And trusting. And just being. True freedom lies in surrender and acceptance. you replied: To find one that can completely surrender and totally be is extremely rare. Not even one in millions. Yet in deep sleep, all has to let go. How can one be denied such a precious state of beingness. For a person that has experienced no-self (non-duality), deep sleep is even more important. It is the completion of a full cycle of non-duality and natural beingness. But this may not be the case for one that clings to the "Eternal Witnessing". There is a very subtle holding in them for maintaining this witnessing subconciously thereby denying them from naturally going into deep sleep. If it reaches a point that presents itself as a problem, it is a signal to the practitioner that it is time to let go and dissolve the holding of the Witness, the center. It will be tough to simply try just "let go" of the center and if this is the case, an insight into our "emptiness nature" may help. Only after going through a full cycle of natural non-duality and beingness in all three states will a practitioner sleep be shorten. I called this the second cycle of non-duality.

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:23am UTC+08

In fact I told you not to practice that way cause you asked me before. I told you I practice trying to maintain awareness in the 3 states before

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:24am UTC+08

Yeah not this

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:24am UTC+08

http://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/232880

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:24am UTC+08

Sleep cycle shorten due to clarity but deep sleep is a form of samadhi. In fact I told you not to practice that way cause you asked me before. I told you I practice trying to maintain awareness in the 3 states before and face a lot of problems

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:26am UTC+08

Jonls is one but Simpo and you also

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:26am UTC+08

18 Sep `06, 11:44AM Originally posted by longchen: I don't have the book with me now... But... I think he said something like this... 1. Be the witnessing Presence... watching the thinker. This should be I AM. 2. He also described a time that he has no thoughts for long periods of time. This is like a state of gap between thinking. 3. Eternal, ever-present one life beyond forms Possibly another state... The wording of 'beyond' implies that he sees a separation. There

shouldn't be a 'beyond'. Yes Longchen, Very well said. There never was a gap, it can't be. It is one whole flow and nothing else. When there is one, there is two. When the one subsides, nothing isn't the one Reality. Clear transparency of the One Reality also has its problem. An illumination into the non-duality without certain pre-requiste can cause problems. There is always habitual propensities that will again make this experience an object of attachment. It can cause a person to go without sleep as the body is incapable of dealing with this new found experience. Many have mistaken this to be a heightening of awareness and took it as a natural progression. This is not true. Whenever this happens, know that it is due to attachment. Learn how to let go of everything until a tranquil calmness arise, it has got to do with our thought patterns, there must come this willingness to let go of our body completely, then our thoughts and the experience of presence...completely letting go from moment to moment...the senses and thoughts can be shut by this art of letting go and non-attachment. Total letting go and vivid Presence must fuse into one. Practice during the waking state till the there is no single trace of doubt that there is absolutely no one there, no inner and no outer, just the incredible realness and vividness of the manifestation. The experience of non-dual in the waking state. Witnessing dreams and there is no witness, just dreams is different. Dealing with the more subtle states and pre-conscious propensites require one to master this art of non-attachment, non-action. There is no conscious way of dealing with the more subtle states, just stabilized the experience and allow the momentum to carry us naturally into the dream and deep sleep. Sleep well.

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:27am UTC+08

oh

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:28am UTC+08

06 Feb `07, 11:58AM Originally posted by longchen: Hmmm... although i have fully understood that existence is non-dual and can at times goes into the bliss of no one, physical pain still hurts like hell. I think we should not negate pain and suffering. For those who have suffered losses in the recent floods, the pain is real. The subject-object split is false... but the pain created by causes and conditions is real. And that is what non-dual is all about. There is no-self to obstruct the experience, it is as real and as clear as it can be. you replied: Side Message: The deep dreamless sleep is a very precious state of being, a natural samadhi of its own, a measure of accomplishment in the first complete cycle of non-dual. If conditions are understood along with our pristine nature, all 3 states flow as a single whole.

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:28am UTC+08

Yes. When?

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:30am UTC+08

06 Feb `07, 11:58AM

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:30am UTC+08

buddhism.sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/235502

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:30am UTC+08

Yeah...coz he is still in witnessing state. Lol...I still rem

Soh Wei YuSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:32am UTC+08

huh.. can't be.. longchen at that time already stabilized nondual

John TanSaturday, February 15, 2014 at 12:33am UTC+08

Yeah but not anatta. Non-dual awareness. Or has he realized anatta? If he does, then I would have told him total exertion"

"Where is my Master? From Chan Newsletter No.19, February 1982

When Chan Master Gaofeng Yuanmiao (1238-1295) met Chan Master Xueyan Zuqin (1216-1287), the latter asked him: "You've been practicing for so long. At this point, do you have mastery of yourself when you are awake?" That is to say, when you are awake, can you not think about things you should not, and can you not do what you should not? Gaofeng immediately replied: "Yes." This is already very good. Only someone who has practiced for along time would be able to say yes. Xueyan questioned him again: "At night in your dreams, do you have mastery of yourself?" And again Gaofeng answered, "Yes." Xueyan then asked a third question: "When you are sleeping and not dreaming, where is the master then?"

Now Gaofeng had already been working on wu for quite a long time, but this question completely stumped him. [The practice of asking a question like, "What is wu (emptiness)?" is called huatou, and is related to the practice of gong'an (Jap., koan).] He repeated the question to himself but could not give an answer. So Xueyan told Gaofeng: "From now on, do not study Buddhadharma, do not read sutras or commentaries; just practice. And how does one practice? When you are hungry, eat; when you are sleepy, go to sleep. After sleeping, get up and practice."

From that time onward, when Gaofeng was hungry, he ate, when he felt tired, he slept, and just tried practice hard. And what was his practice? He asked the question, "Where is my master?" Even during his sleep, he continued, "Where is my master?"

From that time onward, when Gaofeng was hungry, he ate, when he felt tired, he slept, and just tried to practice hard. And what was his practice? He asked the question, "Where is my master?" Even during his sleep, he continued, "Where is my master?"

There are various stages involved here. The first one is whether we can be our own master when we are awake. What we do not want to think, we will not think; what we do not want to do, we will not do. How many of you can be your own master in this sense? If not, why not? By answering positively to the first question, Gaofeng showed that he was on a higher level of attainment than an ordinary person.

To be one's own master in dreams is an even higher attainment. It means that you can control your own behavior in your dreams, and moreover, you can control the type and content of the dreams. You will not have random or meaningless dreams, and while dreaming, you have a very clear mind. This kind of person is actually still practicing while dreaming. He or she always maintains right mindfulness or virtuous thoughts, that is, he will not do or think anything in the dream that is not considered permissible in daily life. To be one's own master in your dreams means that you continue the same practice while dreaming that you do during the day. If you prostrate to the Buddha during the day, then you will continue prostrating in the dream. If you recite Buddha's name, then even in dreams you still recited Buddha's name. If you are delivering sentient beings, then you also deliver sentient beings in your dreams. If you are working on a huatou then even in dreams the huatou will not leave you.

Not to have dreams at all is on a higher level still, and difficult to accomplish. It is already very good if you can reach the level where you no longer have any confusing or evil dreams, but it is very hard for the ordinary person to not dream at all. Sages have dreamless sleep; they are just in a state of rest. Master Gaofeng had already reached the level where, at least most of the time, he was able to sleep without dreaming. But does that mean that all of his problems had been resolved? Actually, being able to sleep without dreaming only indicates that he had very good samadhi power. It does not necessarily mean he was enlightened.

Therefore the question that Xueyan put to him was very appropriate, and it became a huatou for Gaofeng. He just kept on asking himself, "[When I'm asleep and not dreaming,] where is my master?" Because asking this question aroused a great doubt in his mind, Gaofeng kept asking this question for five years. However, remember that even before he started on this huatou, he had already reached the state where he was his own master when awake as well when he was dreaming. So his practice involved a very long process up to this point.

One evening Gaofeng woke up from sleep and reached for his pillow. At that point, the pillow fell to the floor with a thud. At the sound, Gaofeng shouted, "Aha! Now I have found you!" The cloud of doubt was dispelled; he emerged from the "barrel of black pitch" and saw the light. This is an example of one practitioner's path to enlightenment.

(From Chan Newsletter No.19, February 1982)

- Venerable Sheng Yen"

Tips on Energy Imbalances

(Also see: **Potential Sleep Disruptions** under the chapter on Stage 1)

"Energy must flow and [be] circular." - John Tan, 2019

We should do somatic, energy and yogic practices that help to circulate energy. As with any other practices, consistency is key for good results.

“When we practice, it is to face difficult situation when it happens. Same thing [for] when you practice deep breathing and being rooted to earth, [it should be] an ongoing practice. You can't have effective result when you do only when you need, and when you don't need, you don't do.” - John Tan, 2019

“Those teachers that like to teach people focus on brow (Soh: the area between your eyebrows) is dangerous. Insight is safest. Then [for the] rest they have to find their own teacher. Unless you have a teacher that is familiar with energy practices. Breath control can eliminate lots of issues if done properly but still you need to learn how to relax.” - John Tan, 2019

“Be as light as feather and as immense as universe in taste.” - John Tan, 2019

“[9:42 PM, 6/5/2020] John Tan: You need first to feel the energetic radiance throughout your body. Not on your head. Not noticing. Not in park. But it is better for you to practice in open area still even with your insight. even with the energetic radiance, still it is empty... high contrast as one
[9:44 PM, 6/5/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. High contrast?
[9:45 PM, 6/5/2020] John Tan: Many times our energy got stuck on our brow area due to unbalance without noticing it. Because we always focus. Over focusing on experience without noticing it. Especially PCE. The article I wrote on open-heart is important
[9:49 PM, 6/5/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. where is that?
[9:49 PM, 6/5/2020] John Tan: The eat god... Pressing my leg is presence pressing presence. You must not understand it as just non dual”

“[9:50 am, 02/12/2021] John Tan: On advising energy imbalances, you need to see situation and the conditions of individuals. Your’s and Ryan cases are due to over focusing on the intensity of clarity as appearances.
[9:51 am, 02/12/2021] John Tan: For example when you read AF instead of refining selflessness.
[9:52 am, 02/12/2021] John Tan: That is why I am against non-conceptuality as the way.
Soh: Oic..
John Tan: Have you wondered what is selflessness in active mode? What does freedom from self-nature entail?”

“Soh Wei Yu

I cannot imagine how anyone with a serious energy imbalance could sustain a career or lead a normal life (well John Tan did back in the days, to my amazement). So be careful. Learn how to release and be somatic.

Soh Wei Yu

From personal experience, I knew I couldn't sustain a career with those symptoms. Fortunately those symptoms lasted only 7 days and it was not a very busy period of my work, so I could still get my work done, and still appeared rather coherent and normal to others at work. Already, it was affecting my thought patterns, my focus, my ability to work in a rather significant manner. On the last day of it I felt I could not operate my vehicle to go home. Was considering to take leave if symptoms persisted. But miraculously all those symptoms just vanished all of a sudden on that day.

Yet mine was not as bad was John Tan's or AF Richard or others back in the days:
http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/.../list.../listdclaudiu.htm
• [Richard]: 'The official term for insanity these days, due in no small part to the medicalisation of psychiatry, is mental illness/mental disorder ... and it was mainly because of such medicalisation that professional diagnosis came about.
As briefly as possible: at one stage during *a thirty-month involuntary and incessant excitation of the brain cells* (officially diagnosed as being 'an excess of dopamine in the post-synaptic receptors') after becoming actually free from the human condition I vaguely recalled, from my art-college days, that a person experiencing what was colloquially known as a 'bad trip' on lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD) could be brought down with an injection of some medication or another so I popped into the nearest medical centre to where I was then residing and an elderly general practitioner (with very shaky hands) referred me to a specialist as a matter of course.
For more details about that neuronal agitation copy-paste the following, as-is, into the search-box at Google: excitation of the brain cells site:www.actualfreedom.com.au/richard/ You will get you about 17 hits'. [emphasis added]. Actual Freedom Mailing List, No. 111, 6 May 2006
Put succinctly: it was that 'thirty-month involuntary and incessant excitation of the brain cells' – otherwise known as 'neuronal agitation'/ 'cerebral agitation' – which brought the totally new way of being conscious (a completely original consciousness) for all humankind to avail themselves of, into existence.
(Hence that epithet 'genitor' being a most apt descriptor inasmuch it explicitly conveys the radical nature inherent to the genesis of this epoch-changing consciousness).
As it was altogether a ghastly/ horrendous period – I refer to it as being 'macabre and gruesome' in 'Richard's Journal' for instance – I was well-pleased that none of that daring handful of pioneers, circa late 2009/early 2010, underwent anything of that nature.
(So as to convey some idea of what it entailed I have, on occasion, likened the intensity of that involuntary and incessant synaptic reconfiguration to what it would be like, after having physically gashed an arm or leg deeply, to then spend the next 30+ months dragging the sharp point of a sewing-needle back-and-forth through that gash 24/7, without any let-up whatsoever, and with all of modern medicine's arsenal of drugs only exacerbating/ magnifying the intensity).
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Mailing List 'D' Claudiu / Beoman Claudiu Dragon Emu Fire Golem

Soh Wei Yu

So I'm glad that so far, with right pointers, none of those here in AtR had to suffer the same thing, at least not to the extent of its intensity and duration. (So far, about 40 people have realised anatta after encountering AtR) So I don't think this should be a cause for worry - you just need to know how to deal with this, read the AtR guide, do somatic practices and yoga, and learn how to release. Find a good energy master -- whether Vajrayana, Taoist, Hindu, doesn't matter, if they can help you deal with those issues if they come.
If I were to tell you what John Tan's experience of energy imbalance was like in his earlier years (after I AM) it would scare too many people. Basically it could be suicidal for those who are unable to bear it. I don't know how John Tan could bear it, continue to live his life, with a very successful career/businesses even with those. A miracle.
...

Soh Wei Yu

Energy imbalances can get very serious. I was in a super-'psychedelic' state of consciousness for a long time with serious side effects for about a week. It could have gone far worse had I not received pointers by John Tan (which I posted in the AtR guide on energy imbalances)

[27/3/19, 9:56:59 PM] John Tan: Actually when we are in a state of intense radiance, we are in a very tense mode. Being natural, open and non-attached is a tremendously luxury and rare state. The mind doesn't really know what is it like because it is so unfamiliar to the mind. We therefore should not fool ourselves and over-claim anything.
It takes many decades to truly understand the energetic pattern of natural openness.
[27/3/19, 11:44:23 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. i agree with the tense mode but today i got better because i make it a conscious effort to not attend to any details in experience
[27/3/19, 11:44:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: like when music is playing, i dont focus on it at all.. just openness but non focused
[27/3/19, 11:44:58 PM] John Tan: Slowly
[27/3/19, 11:45:15 PM] John Tan: Few hours before sleep don't focus on anything

[27/3/19, 11:46:26 PM] Soh Wei Yu: but i notice all the colors in my experience are still changed even if i dont focus on it.. like it has taken a hue, like brighter and deeper like psychedelic, but still i dont attend to anything at all.. just relax and let go
[27/3/19, 11:47:19 PM] Soh Wei Yu: then i remember you.g. krishnamurti term 'mutation of the brain' then i was thinking maybe a mutation has taken place in my brain lol.. but i dont want to think so much so i didnt pursue the thought
[27/3/19, 11:47:42 PM] John Tan: Lol...headache
[27/3/19, 11:48:51 PM] Soh Wei Yu: lol
[28/3/19, 12:00:16 AM] John Tan: Just relax. I can tell 100% you are focused on wrong thing

[12:03 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: I think it is a natural progression otherwise one can't really understand what it meant by natural openness. Hope you don't have to go through the hard way...lol
[12:05 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Ya cos the concentrated mode is causing suffering for me🤣
[12:05 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Ai but you kept focusing on wrong thing
[12:06 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: And if you reached a state of no return ... You will have to face it for life
[12:06 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. Wah
[12:06 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Focusing on what wrong thing
[12:06 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: And how to avoid
[12:06 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: I am serious
[12:07 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: It is difficult as it has become a habit as much I have been showing compassion for you
[12:07 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. what habit
[12:07 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: But I have been trying not to focus on the radiance lately
[12:08 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: I think my energy is getting better but not completely cured
[12:08 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Don't notice on the details, go for somatic... Let your body take the load and stress
[12:08 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Exercise and do yoga
[12:09 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Don't think.. don't engage...don't analyse...don't even think what has changed..colors or whatsoever
[12:09 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: For now, you are still far away from understanding the energetic pattern of non-attachment
[12:10 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: You can't differentiate tension from release as I have told geo.
[12:10 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: If you have understood you won't be suffering.
[12:11 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: If you have understood you won't be telling me that...everything will be naturally open and light
[12:12 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Be without center, don't engage in everything
[12:12 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Focus on your yoga
[12:12 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: On your body
[12:12 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Don't think of dharma
[12:12 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Don't think of radiance
[12:12 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Don't think of what UG said.
[12:12 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: All these will not help you
[12:13 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Focus on your body and do yoga
[12:13 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Ok
[12:13 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: And this need time to allow your body to take over
[12:13 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: I have told you focus on the somatic
[12:15 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: You have so much wrong understanding
[12:15 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: your body doesn't know what is relaxation at all
[12:15 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: So is your mind

[12:16 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: So first train your body to relax
[12:16 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Know what is letting go
[12:16 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Do you know what is be tired and let go?
[12:16 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Do you know how your body get tired and let go?
[12:17 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: your body must know how to relax and let go ... your mind kept interfering
[12:17 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: So be determined to really learn how your body relax
[12:17 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Get it?
[12:18 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Know exhalation fully as letting go
[12:18 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: You can do a million times yet Everytime is different
[12:19 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Let your body learn what is natural relaxation
[12:20 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: your body is so conditioned that the way you think it is let go is in actually holding tightly
[12:21 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Because we don't actually know how
[12:21 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: I can tell you that you won't know
[12:22 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Because you are using your mind
[12:22 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: But it maybe using a metal plate to scratch your stomach which is totally out of your mind
[12:22 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: It maybe putting hot water on your feet because you din know it
[12:23 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: It maybe exhalation
[12:23 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: It maybe shitting
[12:23 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: It maybe perspiring
[12:23 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: But your mind never think of anything like that right?
[12:23 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: It may be massaging your legs
[12:24 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: But because your mind is so conditioned, you only use your mind to think to go through a process of thinking your way towards letting your body release
[12:24 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Get it?
[12:25 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: You are using your mind to think of this and that
[12:25 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: You do not know your body at all
[12:25 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: So you think it is relaxing
[12:26 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[12:28 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: 刮痧器
[12:28 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Scratch your chest and stomach can help you relax better.
[12:29 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: All these are part of understanding your body
[12:29 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Eating too much is tension
[12:29 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Get it?
[12:34 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: You working tomorrow right?
[8:05 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah I'm working
[8:05 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Slept ok?

[8:06 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Sleeping was still difficult, I didn't know what time I fell asleep but I Guess slightly better than two days back (Comments by Soh: the following days were worse, on one day I could not sleep at all and had brief hallucinations/images the next day and entered trance like states)
[8:06 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Then it is still ok
[8:06 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Don't think too much
[8:07 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Just keep focusing on somatic and bodily release
[8:07 AM, 3/28/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Ok..
[8:08 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: Another good way is to practice anatta on compassion for others ... Not on the radiance
[8:09 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: That is the only two thing you should focus now
[8:10 AM, 3/28/2019] John Tan: If you can't go yoga you can just practice shaking your hand and body and relax... Feel the vibrating sensation of the blood flow of your body

Soh Wei Yu

So take care and be somatic, like what others advised above.

Soh Wei Yu

It seems to be a common issue. AF Richard suffered hell for 2 years.. J Krishnamurti and UG Krishnamurti longer. Zen Master Hakuin, etc, too. But by practicing correctly and not over focusing the wrong way, that can be prevented.

Soh Wei Yu

AF Richard describing his two years of agony which I could totally relate (but fortunately it was much shorter for me):
January 16 2004
RESPONDENT: Richard, regarding the cerebral agitation you experienced after waking up from enlightenment: Was it caused by excess dopamine ...
RICHARD: Yes (although I do not describe it as waking up).
RESPONDENT: ... or was it caused by not knowing how to interpret what had happened to 'you'?
RICHARD: No.
RESPONDENT: Did the elevated dopamine subside to a more manageable level over 2 years ...
RICHARD: Yes.
RESPONDENT: ... or did the agitation quickly subside when you were able to make sense of what had happened?
RICHARD: No.

RESPONDENT: I remember(?) reading that you experienced something like this in 1981, but it was only a passing reference. Have you written about it in detail?
RICHARD: Yes.
RESPONDENT: If so, where can I read about it?
RICHARD: Here is one instance:
• [Co-Respondent]: '... what 'process' was going on for six months in 1981 and thirty months in 1993-4 when you were 'unstable as all get out'?
• [Richard]: 'The medical diagnosis was that there was an excess of dopamine in the post-synaptic receptors ... an excitation of the brain cells, which was happening of its own accord irregardless of events, and thus not under voluntary control.
These days I am in agreement with that determination as some considerable light was thrown upon it all a few years ago when I drank three cups of strong coffee (I only drink decaffeinated coffee nowadays) in a two-hour period and it set-off a psychotropic episode lasting 5-6 hours ... an episode indistinguishable from what was occurring in 1981 and 1993-1994.
I have since found out that caffeine is a chemical cousin to cocaine (chemical not biological) ... and, as a similar episode occurred a couple of years ago as a result of having a dental injection to anaesthetise the jaw, I now make sure the dentist uses a procaine mixture which does not contain adrenaline, which most such mixtures do, because its effect is also psychotropic.
I am also hypersensitive to alcohol ... even a liqueur chocolate has a deleterious effect.
And here is another:
• [Co-Respondent]: 'Richard, you have said that caffeinated coffee sets off a psychotropic experience for you. Can you elaborate please?
• [Richard]: 'As I understand it, and I am not a pharmacologist, caffeine is a chemical cousin to cocaine (having never ingested the latter I cannot provide an experiential comparison) in that its chemical sum formula is similar:
• caffeine: (chem.) a crystalline alkaloid, C8H10N4O2, which is found esp. in tea and coffee plants and is a central nervous system stimulant; caffeinism: n. headache, sleeplessness, and palpitations caused by excessive intake of caffeine.
• cocaine: an alkaloid, C17H21NO4, which is present in the leaves and other parts of the coca shrub and is used as a local anaesthetic and as a stimulant; cocainism: n. (the condition due to) excessive use of or addiction to cocaine. (Oxford Dictionary).
A psychiatrist (who, unlike a psychologist, has a medical degree) once explained to me that my on-going day-to-day experience is because of an excess of dopamine in the post-synaptic receptors – similar to the effect cocaine or amphetamine or lysergic acid diethylamide produce – hence my understanding is that to ingest caffeine on top of this moment-to-moment experiencing is somewhat similar to overdosing on those substances ... primarily the main symptom is a saturated sensuosity of such brilliance and vividity (as in psychedelic), which satiation can be likened to a television set receiving 4 or 5 channels all at once (inasmuch thought, and thus speech, is unable to keep up with the resultant cacophonic 'white noise'), that the brain cells themselves undergo a non-volitional (chemical) excitation of such a magnitude as to be almost impossible for awareness to sustain itself (as in too much to bear).
It is altogether unpleasant, to say the least.

Some peoples I have spoken to about this have initially been rather envious (given that having a cup or two of strong java, then, is the equivalent of dropping a tab of acid (or snorting a line of coke) until I explain that to OD on LSD (aka 'have a bad trip') on maybe a thrice-daily basis is not a particularly pleasant way of living a life.
As I have not taken either amphetamine nor methamphetamine, which are also classified as central nervous system (CNS) stimulants, I cannot make an experiential comparison there either but I have read, for example, that methylphenidate (such as 'Ritalin') – also a CNS stimulant – is a dopamine reuptake inhibitor ... which means that it increases the level of the dopamine neurotransmitter in the brain by partially blocking the transporters that remove it from the synapses.
(snipped)
And before the incident with the caffeine overdose here is an example of how I described the 1981 experience:
• [Richard]: 'I had a constant pressure-pain in the base of my skull for six months after my 1981 experience (and for thirty months after my 1992 experience). This pressure-pain waxed and waned in intensity and would produce a convulsive jerking of my left leg for periods varying from five minutes to an hour. I have had flashing lights 'zapping' in front of my eyes; I have had 'rushes' of energy surging up through my diaphragm; I have had intense tingling sensations on the surface of my skin; I have had liquid sounds 'gurgling' through my brain; I have had singing in my ears; I have been telepathic; I have been telemetric; I have accessed the 'Akashic Record'; I have ... the list goes on and on.
They all amount to nothing in the end – they are but physical, emotional, mental and psychic adumbrations that indicate merely that a 'process' is going on. It is important to not get hung up on these manifestations and to go with what is happening to the very end.
I see that I expanded upon this list in an e-mail to you last month:
• [Richard]: '... I had many bizarre things happen such as electrical bolts of lightning dazzling on the eyeballs; pressure-pains in the base of the neck; surges of power travelling up the spine and up over the back and the top of the head down to the forehead; convulsive twitching of limbs; energy surges from the pit of the stomach up through the diaphragm into the chest cavity through to the throat producing intense nausea; a vivid blue light, an internal blue of rapturous bliss, behind the eyebrows; an all-knowing cyclopean eye in the sky watching my every move and many, many other weird things – none of which are important in themselves (some people get caught up in them, and manifest psychic powers, thus never proceeding to the final goal) as what is important is to take them only as a sign that a process is underway and thus proceed with all dispatch via one's active consent.
- http://www.actualfreedom.com.au/richard/listafcorrespondence/listaf60.htm"

"[10:16 AM, 6/29/2020] John Tan: Mr. F is very experiential, no need to be too theoretical into emptiness, non-arisen of phenomena for now.

Rather it is to allow him to move the energy and radiance to his body...entire body...although the background is gone, you may think that all six senses are in equal radiance but it is far from truth in real time and causes all the energy imbalances.

Relax into the natural state and feel the energetic radiance over the entire body. Not by way of thinking. Touch anything, touch the toes, they legs, feel them. It is your mind...lol...can you understand that?

[10:23 AM, 6/29/2020] John Tan: The mountain is mind, the grasses are mind, everything is mind. That is through the vision and mental, feel the body, toes fingers, touch them. They are mind. So do you understand that in real time?
As for sleep don't worry too much, it will happen and use less thoughts, let whole body be a sense of touch not by thinking, but feel and touch it. So don't think that when insight of all is mind anatta arise, means you are already into all is mind. If you can't embrace and feel all as mind, how are you to eliminate the common denominator called mind and into no mind which is the natural state of anatta."

"(To someone experiencing insomnia that lasted a week after realizing anatta:) Did you overfocus on the radiance in the day? Is your luminosity too intense and do you experience energy surges? You should learn yoga and do vase breathing and circulate your energies. If you are experiencing an energy imbalance, stop thinking about anything for now, even anatta, awareness, emptiness, etc. Just relax and let go. Don't focus on radiance for now. Be more human. Be mindful of energy being stuck in crown and third eye area. And an unconscious tendency to focus on the third eye. Bring your energy to the lower body with abdominal breathing and then to the ground. If after the realisation of anatta one has the misunderstanding that you have to focus to experience more, that will strain your subtle body and nervous system and create an imbalance. Release the overfocused pattern of radiance. Also after energy imbalance is solved, maybe look more into the first stanza and Phagguna Sutta - https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2012/09/phagguna-sutta-to-phagguna_22.html

It is important to be wide open, dissolve and relax into openness.. Do not be rigid or forceful or over-concentrated." - Soh, 2019

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Anatta realisation will lead to effortless presence that is the opposite of concentrative. Natural and effortless. So don't think you need to concentrate hard to achieve breakthrough

For example in breathing there is just the breath.. in hearing there is only sound. This is not telling you to concentrate deeply into sound in order to merge with sound. It is just a realisation that in hearing there is always only sound, never a hearer. No concentration needed or effort to "merge"

But don't contemplate this for now, just relax

In your practice you should be spacious and immense as the universe but light as a feather.
After you resolve your energy issues, maybe two weeks later you may want to read Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal

An excerpt:

“Moreover, a wide-awake state of empty and aware mind after making yourself intensely mindful, may be regarded as the meditation. Even though this indeed is the meditation practice, it is still imperfect in the sense of disliking a natural, free and wide-open presence of mind and, instead, preferring to focus excessively in an unrelaxed way.
It is, therefore, extremely important not to be confused about the flawed ways of meditation practice.
The imperfect ways of training still have the possibility of progress, but they are awkward to sustain and so involve the risk of wearying of practice. Through various ways of focusing and relaxing in all instances - perceiving or being empty, thinking or being calm - you must thor- oughly investigate and recognize, so as to find a comfort- able way to sustain it.”

You can get that book for $2 at https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/05/mahamudra-books-for-cheap.html Mahamudra Books for Cheap

Overfocusing on the luminosity of the details of the world can lead to overstraining the nervous system. It feels that the nervous system is strained, creating a tense energy throughout the body-mind and especially at the head and third eye, along with headaches.

“(2:17 PM) Thusness: with the condition of a body, manifest along with the condition of a body. just like the 'eye' can only 'see' certain range, let it be. Not to strain the eyes for what it is not. :) but in each experience, discern with clarity the luminous presence.” - John Tan in 2007 while talking about the energy imbalances by sustaining I AM/Witnessing into sleep

Also see: **Qigong to Circulate Energy** **https://youtu.be/EZT8RC0wRbA**

“Usually it is energy unable to discharge itself and over intense....

There are 4 ways *(to discharge the energy)*,

First is breathing and directing it to inhalation and exhalation. But it is actually retention that helps most.

Second, diet.

Third is asanas.

Forth is massage.

The rest is using your mind to relax.

You need to know exactly how to and the correct way.

Go and buy one this for gua sha... energy imbalance will cause body inflammation badly.

...

Retention is difficult to talk on writing and it is my own method so I don't tell people. But retention is a powerful cure however [done] to the extreme can cause brain damage." - John Tan, 2019

"You should consult a doctor of traditional Tibetan medicine or Ayurveda if you feel you have a vāyu disorder." – Kyle Dixon, 2021

"Energy imbalance is a disharmony in our energy system due to over focusing on certain aspect in our mind body system. Once it is upset, patience, relaxation and diet or some *TCM (Soh: Chinese Traditional Medicine)* medication to help qi (blood/fluid circulation) can help restore the balance. Diet and relaxation are very crucial esp diet and certain postures to ease the tensions if we know how. Very often we neglect these aspects as we over-focused on our partial understanding of what "consciousness" is." – John Tan, 2021

"[10:48 pm, 11/04/2022] John Tan: Didn't get well must go to TCM (*Soh: Chinese Traditional Medicine)* to tiao (Soh: tune) the body. Don't anyhow listen.
[10:49 pm, 11/04/2022] John Tan: Usually have enough rest will do but if prolong means will turn poisonous to the body

...

[11:05 am, 12/04/2022] John Tan: I dunno about Tibetan medicine
[11:06 am, 12/04/2022] John Tan: But western medicine will cure faster and a good Chinese TCM doctor will balance the energy better.

And maintaining your radiances cause imbalances.
Soh: Ic..
[12:40 pm, 12/04/2022] John Tan: Relax
[12:41 pm, 12/04/2022] John Tan: But don't practice now as it is already dis-rupted. So go for some medicine to help.
Soh: Oic.. guess i will continue my tibetan medicine for a month.. think shld help. The doctor description sounds like the tcm with a lot of emphasis on how to tiao the energy
She also ask me to bring my urine then she shake the bottle to see its contents and also see if im heaty etc to see what medicines suits me
John Tan: 👍

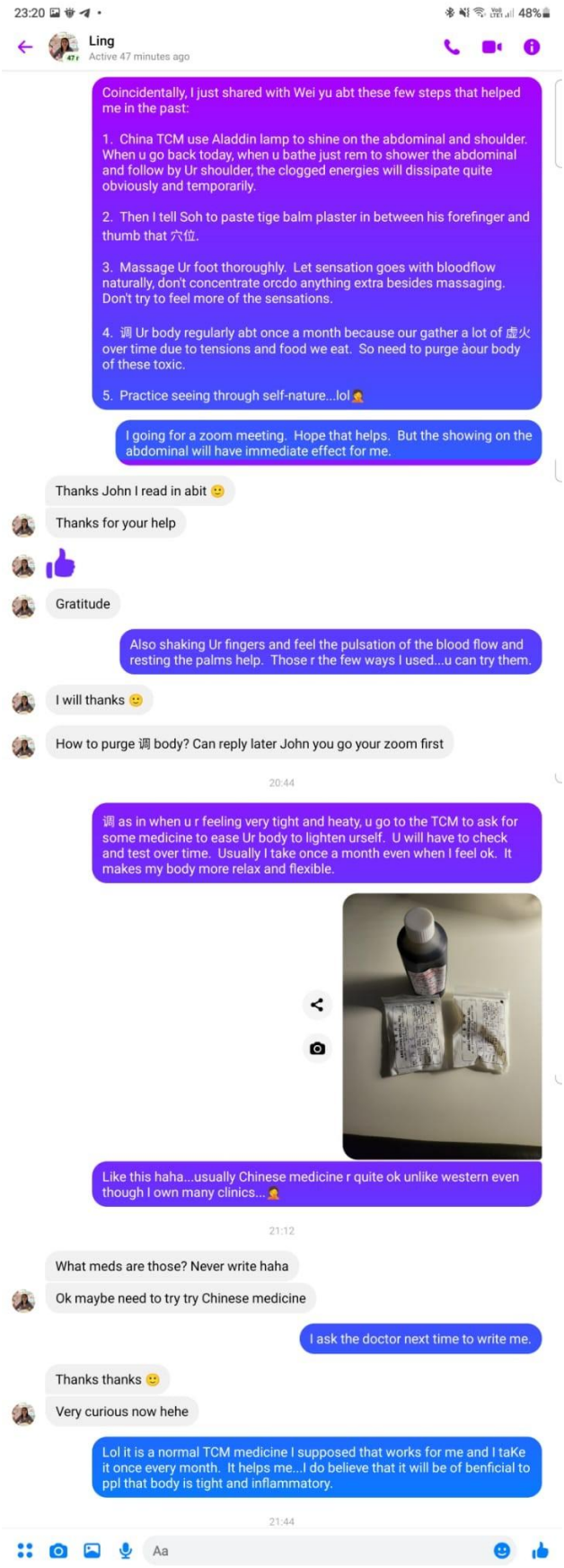
Soh: What kind of western medicine btw?
Didnt know western meds can cure
John Tan: You just have to describe to an experience western doctor. It is just western doctors cure the symptoms.

[Soh: Western medicines can treat the symptoms quickly but does not address the underlying causes such as the energy imbalances. Hence, once should find traditional Chinese or Tibetan medicines and doctors for addressing the underlying root causes even if one is taking western medicines for quick relief of symptoms.]" – John Tan 2022

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
What kinds of meds do western doctors prescribe for energy imbalances?

- 10h

Yin Ling
Admin
Soh Wei Yu lol depends on what you tell them, JT got any experience ?
If headache they give paracetamol
If nausea they give anti nausea
If pain they give painkiller
If itchy antihistamine
I actually took some benzodiazepines 镇定剂 when I had a lot of anxiety mid stage and cannot sleep
and sometimes paracetamol when I got headache .
□ □ Reply
□ 10h


23:20
48%
Ling
Active 47 minutes ago
Coincidentally, I just shared with Wei yu abt these few steps that helped me in the past:
1. China TCM use Aladdin lamp to shine on the abdominal and shoulder. When u go back today, when u bathe just rem to shower the abdominal and follow by Ur shoulder, the clogged energies will dissipate quite obviously and temporarily.
2. Then I tell Soh to paste tige balm plaster in between his forefinger and thumb that 穴位.
3. Massage Ur foot thoroughly. Let sensation goes with bloodflow naturally, don't concentrate orcdo anything extra besides massaging. Don't try to feel more of the sensations.
4. 调 Ur body regularly abt once a month because our gather a lot of 虚火 over time due to tensions and food we eat. So need to purge àour body of these toxic.
5. Practice seeing through self-nature...lol
I going for a zoom meeting. Hope that helps. But the showing on the abdominal will have immediate effect for me.
Thanks John I read in abit
Thanks for your help
Gratitude
Also shaking Ur fingers and feel the pulsation of the blood flow and resting the palms help. Those r the few ways I used...u can try them.
I will thanks
How to purge 调 body? Can reply later John you go your zoom first
20:44
调 as in when u r feeling very tight and heaty, u go to the TCM to ask for some medicine to ease Ur body to lighten urself. U will have to check and test over time. Usually I take once a month even when I feel ok. It makes my body more relax and flexible.
Like this haha...usually Chinese medicine r quite ok unlike western even though I own many clinics...
21:12
What meds are those? Never write haha
Ok maybe need to try try Chinese medicine
I ask the doctor next time to write me.
Thanks thanks
Very curious now hehe
Lol it is a normal TCM medicine I supposed that works for me and I taKe it once every month. It helps me...I do believe that it will be of benficial to ppl that body is tight and inflammatory.
21:44
Aa

"***Q: How should we deal with a lung imbalance?***

Rinpoche: Overactive lung confuses and disturbs the subtle body nervous system and becomes increasingly rigid and solidified–and because of this the natural capacity to feel compassion becomes blocked–your innate ability to feel unconditional, unbiased love, warmth and openness. Without this capacity it will be impossible for you to feel loving kindness and compassion towards others, and to love them. We have to reconnect with our basic nature and relax in that. There is also a special yogic breathing exercise called "vase breathing," which can serve us well here. The breath is closely connected to the subtle wind energy. In my book, ***Open Heart, Open Mind***, I devote a whole chapter to this method.

Q: It is interesting that you mention yogic breathing. Is it worthwhile to practice yoga, chi gong and pranayama in order to be more grounded in meditation? In traditional Tibetan Buddhist teachings, it is my understanding that instructions on breathing exercises are normally not given.

Rinpoche: Yoga, chi-gong and similar energy-balancing can be extremely helpful in cases of disturbed lung. When there is an imbalance the subtle drops (Tib. "*tigle*") are not able to circulate freely in the central channel. This leads to blockages, not on the mental level or in the physical body, but the feeling energy is blocked. In these cases these kinds of exercises can be beneficial to restore a more natural balance. I think that many older Tibetan lamas are not aware of the fact that establishing this equilibrium in the subtle body is so crucial in the West. Traditionally, in Tibetan Buddhism the methods you mentioned in your question are hardly used in relation to the body. That is why they are simply not considered by many teachers, and they do not know much about them. It is also connected with the fact that in Tibetan society, that the emotional body was generally very stable and that there was more of an emphasis on healing the physical body, such as with the neck or with joints and so on." - Tsoknyi Rinpoche, https://tsoknyirinpoche.org/8877/tsoknyi-rinpoche-interview-lung/

"A phenomena generally relating to the winds combining are the outer signs pertaining to the appearance of the clear light. This usually occurs prematurely. If complete ego-death isn't already achieved, it will begin simultaneously as the body begins it's purification. Specifically the outer signs are disturbances and disorders caused by the installation process of the clear-light. Subtle & habitual prana mis-patterning is due to an energetic echo of ego. Even if one has extinguished ego, this energetic-pranic echo can still be. This will be also ceased by the time the actual-clear light dawns; the actual clear-light is entirely different then this early dawning clear-light. The clear-light installation coalescing with with the energetic mis-patterning causes friction (disorders etc).

Including (one or many symptoms may arise, depending on various factors including the rate of evolution pertaining to any one specific yogi):

Various sharp and/or random pains can happen throughout the body and in specific or all the channels. Heat and cold disorders like hot flashes and temperature oscillations. Bloating, swelling, and sores. Illness and pure appearance of illness may arise; the appearances will not generally respond to medications properly. Joint pain, gout, and other arthritic symptoms. Lymph node disorders are possible, neutral lymph changes are rather normal. Specific types of archetypal visions. Some temporarily lose a grip on their behavior to a degree. Temporarily one's behavior doesn't align with one's speech. Idle sometimes random chatter, babbling. Speaking offensively in an unskillful way (different than forceful speech born from skillful-compassion). Concentration may become suddenly interruptible (sometimes even to those

who prior could pass beyond the 5 senses or also those who could cause and reflexively hold the cessation of perception) One may occasionally pass out. Hunger, thirst, and restlessness." - DhO forummer "Omega Point" https://www.dharmaoverground.org/discussion/-/message_boards/message/3604496 (note: Soh did not experience most of these symptoms, but it seems that John Tan's case was more serious in his earlier years)

"Sorry I didn't look into your previous mail, lots of things have been happening to my life lately and something happened to my practice lately that resembles some of the things on the AF site. There is/was the intense actualization of the previous realization (I've had this realization of anatta for 8+ years with varying degrees or intensity in experience since then) of the radiance that is none other than the textures and details of infinite world (which makes the world a paradisiacal wonderland of incredible aliveness and in that sense resembles a constant trip on a psychedelic drug like LSD despite being completely sober, the colors literally look brighter and deeper, the scents and sounds and tactile sensations all becomes intensified and experienced differently - it felt like my brain, body and state of consciousness underwent a form of mutation and transformation) and there is/was an ongoing surge of super-active energy-sensation running through the body (which has by now mellowed a little but not completely gone and I feel this is what makes me more awake and energized in the day), and the state of consciousness was/is so incredibly intense and blissful.

However, at one point an energy imbalance developed (and I think it was partly due to my wrong way of practicing, my overfocusing on the details of the world in PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) created a rather tense energy), a stuck energy in the head and third eye chakra that caused headaches, affected my state of consciousness and thought process (I can hardly focus on work during that time, I was just lucky I didn't have a very busy schedule at work back then), made me barely able to work and function and sleepless (at the peak of the imbalance at least for one day I could not sleep at all - my body laid on the bed while the mind was awake) and then on the last day I actually spent half an hour in the office toilet to calm my energies with the nausea which was hard to bear and on that day I entered a half-awake trance like state and had flashes of figures (like two brief one-second flashes of hallucination - one of a witch-looking woman wearing black and one of an alien-looking man with big eyes) and on a separate occasion (not tied to or caused by the hallucination - the brief flashes of images caused no fear in me) a brief one second flash of bodily sensations that seemed like fear caused by (or rather, is none other than a brief outburst of) the agitation of stuck energy but without any mental story or emotional content. I intuitively stood up and walked around, as soon as I stood up it subsided. But nonetheless it did cast doubt on my having overcome fear, but a further insight some days later seemed to do further damage to the sense of self involved in fear. Also, during that day I entered the world of sound where music took on a new depth while relaxing with music, but I quickly snapped out of it as I knew any focusing on sound will agitate my energies further. After these unpleasant experiences I thought to myself that I needed my family members to drive me home from work that day as I did not think it will be safe for me to operate a vehicle with my condition then. Fortunately by 5pm+ the tense energy in my head and chest suddenly lifted and my mind went back to normal. It has been solved since then (it's been about 2~3 weeks already), no more headaches, stuck and tense energy, trouble falling asleep, brain fog, etc. I was very wary of consuming caffeine (I avoided all coffee, tea, and chocolates) then as even a cup of tea was able to trigger another episode of a shift of consciousness and energy that sort of resembles the over-excited energy even about 1~2 weeks ago, but by now I am able to enjoy a cup of coffee without too much issues.

I was reminded of Richard's 2 years period of mental agony and 'brain excitation' and U.G. Krishnamurti's 'calamity' that he said was a mental torture which lasted 3 years. (Update: I have later found out that J Krishnamurti had experienced similar tortures for a decade or more. Also see his book Krishnamurti's Notebook) Fortunately that only lasted like a week or so and I am so glad to have solved that rather quickly (instead of years) with the advise of Thusness who seems to have gone through all these, he basically taught me to relax, completely stop any thinking or contemplating (including but not limited to any issues pertaining to self/no-self/actual/radiance/universe/etc) as it has been my experience too that any thinking simply agitates my energies further at that point, stop focusing in a contrived manner, stop focusing on radiance and simply concentrate on somatic practice and rooting to the earth, bringing the energy into the abdomen and ground. That helped. (For a somewhat related energy practice, see https://buddhismnow.com/2015/09/12/zen-sickness-by-zen-master-hakuin/) John Tan had also informed me that the energy imbalance could have been far worse had I not nipped it in the bud.

Now all the good things remain without the energy imbalance stuff, like the full glory of PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) and the infinitude of the universe (without any need for focusing or effort - the centerless, boundlessness and infinitude of the universe is simply spontaneously present and living this 'flesh and blood body') where the field of consciousness is very naturally, unconstricted by the sense of a center, the vast infinite expanse (centerless, boundless) of the universe without the slightest trace of self/Self in which this body and everybody and everything is the expression of/with, a total exertion with the whole universe, including lessened sleep (right after I overcome the energy imbalance: 4-5 hours, now [2 to 3 weeks later] 5-6 hours, but in the past I can sleep anywhere from 7 to 10 hours plus naps in the afternoon if I'm free) but have no trouble falling asleep at all, and I feel much more energised with that lessened amount of sleep than when I was waking up with the help of alarm clocks with 7 hours of sleep everyday back then. John Tan (Thusness) himself sleeps only 4 to 5 hours everyday and has told me 10+ years ago that at some point my sleep will lessen and I will undergo a bodily transformation and become beaming with clarity and energy (the details of what he described was identical to what I have underwent recently), and recently he said he has been expecting that I would experience what I've been experiencing recently but I was behind his expected schedule by 2 years. I see the lessened need for sleep as a positive development for me, as that means I have more time to spend on other things..." - Soh, 2019

"Regarding the difficult part I was experiencing back then – it didn't affect the PCE-mode. In other words, the world was still intensely vivid, like the colors, scent, sounds, take on a new depth, but it felt like it happened because I was too awed by it in some sense, and was straining unnaturally to experience as much as I can, plus with the heightening and intensifying of energy due to that shift it then created a kind of head tension, headache, stuck energy, and all the other health problems I mentioned gradually developed, like a sore throat that later developed into other stuff like nausea and diarrhea, intuitively I felt like it was all linked to my energy imbalance plus I didn't eat out so I knew it wasn't food poisoning, I just ate light oatmeals and stuff as I didn't have appetite at all. Thusness informed me my health issues was due to "Over concentrated and focus will upset your body balance. However once it affects your body this way better to get medical help, you won't be able to release yourself this way... ...Energy is trapped and causes all your body to function improperly because the body doesn't know how to release itself from tension. Shake your hands and bodies let your body feel the release.", and later I found a video by Tsoknyi Rinpoche which described a similar kind energy imbalance I went through and said it will cause digestive issues - **https://youtu.be/ZcB6iUsj25s (Subtle Body 07 (Lung is**

Home)). Thusness who seemed to have gone through all these before told me it was due to the 'overfocused pattern of radiance' which I agreed, and told me to relax so that I feel 'light as a feather but immense as the universe'. And even while the headaches and other difficulties occurred, the PCE-mode is still there, not diminished at all, yet I'm experiencing all the bodily discomforts and sleeplessness. In other words, the world seemed perfect even then, and yet, there's really bad physical discomfort at some point. After that was solved, the PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) mode remained but without the tenseness and I started to experience the infinitude of the universe more and more." - Soh, 2019

"During the height of the energy imbalance episode, while relaxing with music I entered the world of sound where music took on a new depth and intensity like I never experienced before, but I quickly snapped out of it as I didn't want to agitate my energies further. John Tan informed me not to focus on non-dual radiance for the next two weeks during the period of energy imbalance, and purely focus on experiencing no-self in the somatic practices and in compassion, but not radiance.

His advice then:

'Don't think too much. Just keep focusing on somatic and bodily release. Another good way is to practice anatta on compassion for others... Not on the radiance. That is the only two thing you should focus now. If you can't go yoga you can just practice shaking your hand and body and relax... Feel the vibrating sensation of the blood flow of your body'" - Soh, 2019

Nick: "What Somatic Practices or therapies have you tried and would recommend?
Personally I'm interested in anything that could help with chronic tightness and pain and not being able to "let go". The holding is very strong in me. Im currently seeing a biodynamic-psychotherapist which is a somatic/energy therapy based on the Reichian method and it's certainly having some effect but I'm only 2months or so into it so early days yet. It would be good to hear about other therapies folks here have tried as well as free stuff you can learn to do by yourself at home 🙂"

Tyler Jones: "Skeletal shaking / shaking qigong"

"There is so much wisdom from John here, matches what my Daoism teacher says perfectly. The energy gets stuck in a pattern and so is hard to fix yourself - because going inside automatically triggers that same pattern. Shaking is good. Physical exercise is good. Self massage is good - create physical sensations, use the hands not the awareness to move energy. Warm water is good - gets the energy moving outward. Compassion / service to others is good - gets the energy moving outward on a more subtle level. Not thinking is good - certainly not trying to analyze physical sensations in the way some Dharma teachers advise."

"John Tan and my mom (who also had many energetic experiences) both advised me in the same manner - bring my energy to the earth, rub my hands and feet. John Tan also told me to practice abdominal breathing.

On the last day of my energy imbalance - about one week into it, which was also the most intense, John Tan told me to pray sincerely to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and I told him I did. I have prayed to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas just the night before when I could not sleep at all, and wished for a speedy recovery and for my experience to be of a beneficial lesson to others so that others may overcome this problem quickly in future or be free of such agony.

Later on, John Tan revealed to me how much he suffered in the past due to energy imbalances which began some time after his realization of I AMness. I shall not divulge the details, but I think he suffered even more than Zen Master Hakuin's 'post-satori Zen sickness', AF Richard's 2 years of 'mental agony' and 'neuronal excitation', as well as U.G Krishnamurti's three years of 'torturous calamity'. I do not want to scare anyone reading this but I think people deserve to know that these things do happen, and they deserve to know how to navigate these challenging terrains. I must say I feel very fortunate to have overcome it in 7 days. It is easier to overcome while the problem has not yet become aggravated out of control. Only now did it make sense to me when John Tan said in the past that contrary to what people think, one can suffer even more after the realization of I AMness (I AMness on the other hand was a blissful period for me, as John Tan guided me to avoid practicing the wrong way -- i.e. by not focusing practice wrongly based on the stated pitfalls and focusing on the four aspects of I AM). He only partially overcome those problems after the realization of anatta, but warned that even too intense PCE (Pure Consciousness Experience) mode of perception can also cause a problem (as what happened to AF Richard and UGK and my 7 day energy imbalance episode).

To avoid these issues, learn the right way of breathing and somatic practices. You do not have to worry at all if you practice accordingly. To avoid these problems, John Tan suggests,

'You must understand your body, know how breathing affects your energy and diet. Ironically, effects are only apparent when you have energy imbalance, then you are able to experience the release otherwise you will just feel it is normal.'

I also had a tendency to open my eyes wide due to intensified clarity and like to marvel at the wonderful sceneries with eyes wide open, but John Tan told me not to open my eyes widely lest I trigger another energy imbalance episode, and be more human instead. I also mentioned to him that, like U.G. Krishnamurti, I hardly blink my eyes anymore and is always in the zone, and John Tan simply replied that not blinking should not be taken as a sign of enlightenment and that it is important to circulate one's energy. (Focusing too much on the intense clarity of vision will lead to energy stagnation)

"You must experience the intensity of vividness but not fabricate intensity." - John Tan, 2019

When I posted my condition on the Awakening to Reality facebook group, someone suggested that I am experiencing Zen sickness. Upon reading the descriptions in Quora and the text by Zen Master Hakuin, I can confirm that the symptoms are similar and the advice by Zen Master Hakuin is great and helpful.

Another way to prepare the body for "zen sickness" is to practice yoga, which I recommend all able-bodied persons to practice. As John Tan wrote, "...your body is already prone to inflammation. And still further upset by imbalance. So

once your radiance and clarity gets strong, don't intensify but instead balance it with practices like yoga to bring energy into circulation throughout your body. You can manage it with asanas to open various parts of your body. Now if you have wisdom you can realize by your own. If your wisdom and mindfulness isn't strong, you need a teacher to point it out to you. Excessive intake of caffeine, is the same of over intensifying vividness... ...Balance your body circulation. I have already try to prevent you from having issues by telling you to go into yoga few years ago." (Comment about caffeine: caffeine has triggered a mini rerun of an energy imbalance/intensification episodes twice for Soh, so he is cutting down for now)

[25/3/19, 11:44:55 AM] Soh Wei Yu: My concentration at work is definitely affected.. lol
[25/3/19, 11:49:27 AM] John Tan: Affected by?
[25/3/19, 11:50:41 AM] Soh Wei Yu: I dunno.. the intense energetic presence maybe
[25/3/19, 11:50:52 AM] Soh Wei Yu: But I Guess I will get used to it after a while
[25/3/19, 11:52:39 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Actually I think it's affecting my thought process lol.. nvm
[25/3/19, 11:55:40 AM] John Tan: No good
[25/3/19, 12:00:34 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Any suggestion
[25/3/19, 12:00:35 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Lol
[25/3/19, 12:00:40 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Maybe I need to meditate more
[25/3/19, 12:00:52 PM] John Tan: Don't do anything
[25/3/19, 12:00:57 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ok
[25/3/19, 12:01:06 PM] John Tan: Dont think of radiance
[25/3/19, 12:01:12 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ok
[25/3/19, 12:01:33 PM] John Tan: Breathe with your stomach
[25/3/19, 12:01:37 PM] John Tan: Abdominal
[25/3/19, 12:01:48 PM] John Tan: you must feel how you relax down
[25/3/19, 12:02:19 PM] John Tan: Ur energy clogging at the brow center is no good
[25/3/19, 12:02:38 PM] John Tan: Be rooted to earth element
[25/3/19, 12:02:42 PM] Soh Wei Yu: How you know, from my description?
[25/3/19, 12:02:47 PM] John Tan: Usual
[25/3/19, 12:02:51 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Where is brow center
[25/3/19, 12:03:07 PM] John Tan: In between your eye brow
[25/3/19, 12:03:11 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[25/3/19, 12:03:15 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yesterday Angelo told me
[25/3/19, 12:03:32 PM] John Tan: Relax and be rooted to earth element
[25/3/19, 12:03:36 PM] Soh Wei Yu: That's interesting. I've never thought to ask you about "subjective" moment to moment experiences like that. I can relate. Personally I trust my body's intuition 100%. I'll sit and meditate whenever I feel to. For a few minutes or several hours. I don't impose external contexts on practice in the sense that I let the environment meditate me as feels harmonious. Take care my friend. This may or may not be helpful at all but I've done this and told people about it many times who have very intense energetic movements. That is the energy release is trying to move to ground. If you think in terms of physical matter (very densely packed energy) the earth is by far the largest ground available. So the energy wants to move toward ground.
[25/3/19, 12:03:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Adyashanti taught me this. It's odd sounding but it works. Imagine you are looking at a beautiful horse in a pasture and the sun is setting behind it. You can just trace the light over its shoulders and back. It's perfectly smooth. Now you run your hand slowly down the horses main and over its back feeling the

smoothness and light as your hand runs over slowly. In the same ways you feel the energy moving slowly down from your head through your body and into the Earth. I have no idea but I've done it many times and it works for me when a ton of energy being released.
Also I tell people lay on the earth and invite the earth to regulate the energy in your body at the level of heart. May or may not be helpful but it's worked for me and others.
Richele in particular gets very energetic releases in her body. She has gone through periods where she has trouble standing up even. Good luck with work. 😀
[25/3/19, 12:04:34 PM] John Tan: Yes
[25/3/19, 12:05:12 PM] John Tan: Don't think of anything...relax and just be easy and root urself to earth element
[25/3/19, 12:05:35 PM] John Tan: Told you to be as light as feather already
[25/3/19, 12:05:37 PM] John Tan: Lol
[25/3/19, 12:05:41 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Lol
[25/3/19, 12:09:37 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ya it helps.. the energy on my head is loosening
[25/3/19, 12:09:43 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Now I know why got headache
[25/3/19, 12:10:17 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Lucky got you to tell me otherwise I end up like richard suffer for 2 years go hospital and get diagnose with mental illness 🤣
[25/3/19, 12:11:50 PM] John Tan: Don't do anything now
[25/3/19, 12:20:21 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I think I will avoid caffeine for now..
[25/3/19, 12:20:23 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic
[25/3/19, 1:07:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Rooting to the earth element and abdominal breathing is also quite blissful.. and takes off the tension from the intensity of sight and head
[25/3/19, 2:39:29 PM] Soh Wei Yu: My Brain fog is getting better now
[25/3/19, 2:45:00 PM] John Tan: That's good" - Angelo Gerangelo gave an advise to me on rooting to the earth element when I told him about my issues, which coincidentally happened to be similar to John Tan's advise

Sam Balali
Soh Wei Yu why do you think some people like Eckhart tolle and ramana seem so utterly at peace in I AM while others seem to suffer more?

2 · 4h
Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Sam Balali
John Tan told me before he overcame psychological suffering at I AM.
His "suffering" at I AM are purely to do with energy imbalances.
I have seen more than one Advaita [and also Buddhist] teacher speak about not sleeping.. they may even think it is an advancement. But it is an issue
□ · 3h

Angelo Grr
Admin
Sam Balali also I think many people simply don't talk about it bc they don't want to dissuade others from the path. I generally lean that way bc by the time you've had awakening there is a deep knowing that although all this is going on

it's ok and will ultimately work itself out. But from the point of view of someone with a lot of psychological suffering they might think "why in the world would I add all that pain to my experience, no thanks." But that's a skewed view before awakening.
For me there were years of headaches. Lots of pressure in the face and eyes esp during meditation. Back and spine pain. A lot of sleep pattern disturbances (but ultimately that turns out to be ok when you don't make a problem of it by resisting it).
Adyashanti has described it as suddenly there's 1000 volts running through a circuit that is used to 120 volts. He had all kinds of crazy energetic stuff as well.
🙂

3□ · 52m
□ Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Angelo Grr Also, the fact that there are people around to guide and help can definitely shorten the suffering I believe. If not for John Tan's and also your advise to me about grounding energy to earth two years ago, my energy imbalance probably would not have lasted just 7 days but maybe a few years like others 🙂

1· 30m
Angelo Grr
Admin
Soh Wei Yu yes I agree with this , during retreats I really try to emphasize the integrative as well as the disintegrative and offer a balanced approach in the talks, guided meditations etc (energetically speaking). The feedback I get suggests it helps. The energy imbalances I see in retreatants is minimal compared to what I went through in Zen sesshin, and they still wake up, even non-dual isn't uncommon and honestly I think it's even faster for the balancing effect. "Middle way" seems to have a lot of merit. ☺️

2· 26m

Cláudio Cruz
The Q'eros, indigenous from Peru, have a similar approach but they lay down on earth and visualize "hucha" or heavy energy being released back to earth through their belly button.

3

- · 2h
- ·

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Cláudio Cruz My mother who had energy imbalances actually discovered her own method that releases energy into the earth. She taught me 2 years ago when I faced those problems. It's surprisingly similar to what Angelo and John Tan taught me.

- · 9m
- · □ Soh Wei Yu

Author
Admin
She has many A&P and energy/qi experience, but not yet realizations (she also had many glimpses of being the watcher and other nondual/no-mind experiences but not realization). Hoping she can get I AM realization. · 9m

- · □ Soh Wei Yu

Author
Admin
She actually brought me to a nearby reservoir and park, barefooted and release energy into the earth. She also said another way is to hug tree. She sees Qigong people hugging tree sometimes.

- · 5m
- · □ Soh Wei Yu

Author
Admin
She always does that when energy gets stuck in her brow or crown chakra. Otherwise she also can't sleep, will feel very uncomfortable and has other similar issues. She also often do spontaneous qigong (untaught and unstructured) and has some siddhi type experiences.
□ □ ·
Reply
□ · 4m

Yin Ling
Amazing this topic comes up again 🙂I personally have problem with “energy clogging in my brow and head”, especially prominent when insight happens.
My teacher taught me several ways, one is to visualise this energy coming down and spreading the energy throughout the body evenly and going out to the earth from both feet as mentioned above.
Another is to gently tap on the head, forehead and also temples to release some energy, it works for me too.
I intuitively likes being in a “bowing” position where my head touch the ground which feels really good as the energy lightens.
Or sometimes I just do very physical exercise, like lifting or running, which ease the energy abit so I can sleep well.
· 15h

- ·

Angelo Grr
Admin
Yin Ling yes I agree touching the head to the ground helps

2

· 15h
□ Albert Hong
I know its not mentioned ever because everyone is terrified of their genitals.
But if you have energetic imbalances then all you have to do is ground the energy by feeling into your genitals.

6
□ · 13h

Soh Wei Yu
Author
Admin
Just saw a past conversation, about serious energy imbalance:
[1/4/19, 9:07:55 PM] John Tan: As for Mr EW, one effective way to solve it is breathholding of pranayama but it is dangerous and I don't want you to kapo [Soh: be a busybody].
[1/4/19, 9:08:13 PM] John Tan: Even if I were to teach you I would still need to be present.
[1/4/19, 9:08:13 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[1/4/19, 9:08:29 PM] John Tan: However I just don't want you to pose around this sort of things
[1/4/19, 9:08:35 PM] John Tan: Or I said this and that
[1/4/19, 9:08:40 PM] Soh Wei Yu: ic.. yeah can be dangerous if unguided
[1/4/19, 9:08:46 PM] John Tan: Later people faint or die then you know
[1/4/19, 9:09:10 PM] John Tan: This type of energy imbalance is not what you can imagine
[1/4/19, 9:09:29 PM] John Tan: Like last time you are so naive no matter what people tell you you don't listen
[1/4/19, 9:09:54 PM] John Tan: What you faced are just 1% maybe of energy imbalance
[1/4/19, 9:10:08 PM] John Tan: When you go deep can be quite serious
[1/4/19, 9:10:18 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic..
[1/4/19, 9:10:25 PM] Soh Wei Yu: so glad i'm out of it lol
[1/4/19, 9:10:36 PM] Soh Wei Yu: i mean energy imbalance
[1/4/19, 9:10:49 PM] John Tan: Inability to discharge can cause chest congestion
[1/4/19, 9:10:55 PM] John Tan: Headache
[1/4/19, 9:11:03 PM] John Tan: Hallucination
[1/4/19, 9:11:15 PM] John Tan: Inability to sleep is just minor
[1/4/19, 9:11:46 PM] Soh Wei Yu: the last few hours before my energy was solved i got into a very tired yet awake state then i had two brief impressions like hallucinations.. of like a black woman like some kind of monster.. and of an alien with big eyes sort of image. very brief
[1/4/19, 9:12:22 PM] John Tan: in waking state?
[1/4/19, 9:12:27 PM] Soh Wei Yu: then at 5-6pm that day my energy in head seems to dissolve and i felt relieved
[1/4/19, 9:12:31 PM] Soh Wei Yu: then days after that all ok
[1/4/19, 9:12:35 PM] Soh Wei Yu: yeah while i was in office
[1/4/19, 9:12:38 PM] Soh Wei Yu: but sleepy
[1/4/19, 9:12:43 PM] John Tan: Yeah that is bad
[1/4/19, 9:12:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: but yet awake.. a very weird state
[1/4/19, 9:12:53 PM] Soh Wei Yu: but lucky after that gone already
[1/4/19, 9:13:00 PM] John Tan: Yeah
[1/4/19, 9:13:09 PM] John Tan: So don't know just listen

[1/4/19, 9:13:25 PM] John Tan: Especially when you focused on your brow
[1/4/19, 9:13:44 PM] John Tan: Those teachers that like to teach people focus on brow is dangerous
[1/4/19, 9:13:49 PM] John Tan: Insight is safest
[1/4/19, 9:14:07 PM] John Tan: Thn rest they have to find their own teacher
[1/4/19, 9:14:36 PM] John Tan: Unless you have a teacher that is familiar with energy practices
[1/4/19, 9:15:26 PM] John Tan: Breathe control can eliminate lots of issues if done properly but still you need to learn how to relax
[1/4/19, 9:15:47 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. i never focus on eyebrow.. although i tried it before that time sadhguru taught and had some experience of heightened awareness
[1/4/19, 9:15:49 PM] Soh Wei Yu: but after that i never do again
[1/4/19, 9:16:05 PM] Soh Wei Yu: ic..
[1/4/19, 9:16:21 PM] John Tan: Focus on pce is also dangerous
[1/4/19, 9:17:48 PM] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. yeah mine was probably caused by focusing on pce
[1/4/19, 9:18:07 PM] Soh Wei Yu: richard got into two years of 'mental agony' after he attained AF, i suspect is something related
[1/4/19, 9:18:14 PM] John Tan: Yes
[1/4/19, 9:18:15 PM] Soh Wei Yu: and he said got a persisting headache
[1/4/19, 9:18:18 PM] Soh Wei Yu: during that time
[1/4/19, 9:18:48 PM] John Tan: From what he described, it doesn't seem he has solved.
[1/4/19, 9:19:15 PM] John Tan: Otherwise he should have some other understandings
[1/4/19, 9:19:28 PM] John Tan: Which I don't find in his writings
[1/4/19, 9:20:21 PM] John Tan: If energy imbalance worsen + fear, not focus on Earth element or step grass can solve type🤣

....

Those experiencing energy imbalances should do Vase Breathing and Zen Master Hakuin's method below. Even if you do not have energy imbalances, there are many benefits to practicing it, so it is important.

Have you ever experienced "zen sickness" and what was it like?

Sid Kemp, Zen practioner since 1980, sharing Buddhist meditation since 1987.

Answered Apr 8, 2017

What is Zen Sickness?

Zen Sickness is a term that comes specifically from the personal journals of Zen Master Hakuin. It is a very real and unique phenomenon. From both study of the literature and also personal experience, I must disagree with all the other answers here.

Zen Sickness is a side effect that comes with *dai kensho,* great Awakening, also called *satori.* This is the deepest experience of mind, though not the highest attainment, in the Zen path, particularly as seen by the Rinzai school of Zen in Japan, of which Hakuin was a great teacher.

Dai kensho is an Awakening Event (more often, but more inaccurately, called an enlightenment experience) that lasts for two months or more. It leads to great insight and stability of mind.

Zen Sickness is a side effect of *dai kensho,* and of the years of meditative effort to get there. It is an imbalance of chi (or *qi*), vital life energy. It arises because in zazen, Zen sitting, one is perpetually straining upward without realizing it. When the energy finally breaks through, there is a perpetual excess of Heavenly chi. The body is lethargic. Vital energy appears low. All medical remedies fail. As one tries them, symptoms perpetually shift. All diagnosis fails and relief is nowhere in sight.

Fortunately, there actually is a simple remedy. There are some *qi gong* (chi gong) meditations that resolve the difficulty quite quickly. Hakuin learned them from a mountain hermit and wrote them in his journals. I have learned them and used them and shared them with my students.

There is one useful description of Zen sickness from yoga master B. K. S. Iyengar. A Zen student experiencing Zen sickness came to him. He explained that, if one does deep *zazen* without relaxing the body and preparing it through yoga, the body can become very ill. Speaking of the energy that comes in and creates the imbalance, he said, "You have brought these lightnings down upon yourself." The student was able to heal herself with Iyengar yoga. The yoga solution does work, but it is more painful than the *qi gong* solution. Most often, a blend of *qi gong* and yoga together is most useful.

How I work with Zen sickness

You also ask the personal question, "Have you ever experienced Zen sickness?" This question makes sense to ask, but it cannot be answered on a public forum. To declare "I have had Zen sickness" implies "*dai kensho* has happened to this one." To say that in a public forum is an expression of ego attachment. Such matters are discussed privately between Zen practitioners.

I will say that the remedy for Zen sickness is also a preventative, and is also useful as part of a remedy for other physiological and psychospiritual imbalances that arise in sensitive people and during intensive meditation. I share the remedy with students. If I can be of further assistance, please reach out to me in a private message on Quora.

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Pete Ashly

Apr 8, 2017

So, what's the remedy again?

Reply

Upvote

Sid Kemp

Original Author · Apr 12, 2017 · 1 upvote from Pete Ashly

The remedy is Taoist *qigong* meditation exercises that move excess Heaven qi all the way through the body and into the Earth. I'll be happy to teach them to you if you reach out in a private message on Quora.

Reply

Upvote

"https://buddhismnow.com/.../zen-sickness-by-zen-master-hakuin/

Zen Sickness, by Zen Master Hakuin

on 12 September 2015 • (10)

Hakuin Zenji (1689-1769) describes the "Zen sickness" he contracted in his latter twenties and the methods he learned from the recluse Hakuyu in the mountains outside Kyoto that enabled him to cure the ailment.

On the day I first committed myself to a life of Zen practice, I pledged to summon all the faith and courage at my command and dedicate myself with steadfast resolve to the pursuit of the Buddha Way. I embarked on a regimen of rigorous austerities, which I continued for several years, pushing myself relentlessly.

Then one night, everything suddenly fell away, and I crossed the threshold into enlightenment. All the doubts and uncertaint-ies that had burdened me all those years suddenly vanished, roots and all—just like melted ice. Deep-rooted karma that had bound me for endless kalpas to the cycle of birth-and-death vanished like foam on the water.

It's true, I thought to myself: the Way is not far from man. Those stories about the ancient masters taking twenty or even thirty years to attain it—someone must have made them all up. For the next several months, I was waltzing on air, flagging my arms and stamping my feet in a kind of witless rapture.

Afterwards, however, as I began reflecting upon my everyday behaviour, I could see that the two aspects of my life—the active and the meditative—were totally out of balance. No matter what I was doing, I never felt free or completely at ease. I realised I would have to rekindle a fearless resolve and once again throw myself life and limb together into the Dharma struggle. With my teeth clenched tightly and eyes focused straight ahead, I began devoting myself single-mindedly to my practice, forsaking food and sleep altogether.

Before the month was out, my heart fire began to rise up-ward against the natural course, parching my lungs of their essen-tial fluids.[1] My feet and legs were always ice-cold: they felt as though they were immersed in tubs of snow. There was a constant buzzing in my ears, as if I were walking beside a raging mountain torrent. I became abnormally weak and timid, shrinking and fear-ful in whatever I did. I felt totally drained, physically and mentally exhausted. Strange visions appeared to me during waking and sleeping hours alike. My armpits were always wet with perspira-tion. My eyes watered constantly. I travelled far and wide, visiting wise Zen teachers, seeking out noted physicians. But none of the remedies they offered brought me any relief.

Master Hakuyu

Then I happened to meet someone who told me about a hermit named Master Hakuyu, who lived inside a cave high in the mountains of the Shirakawa District of Kyoto. He was reputed to be three hundred and seventy years old. His cave dwelling was two or three leagues from any human habitation. He didn't like seeing people, and whenever someone approached, he would run off and hide. From the look of him, it was hard to tell whether he was a man of great wisdom or merely a fool, but the people in the surrounding villages venerated him as a sage. Rumour had it he had been the teacher of Ishikawa Jozan [2] and that he was well versed in astrology and deeply learned in the medical arts as well. People who had approached him and requested his teaching in the proper manner, observing the proprieties, had on rare

occa-sions been known to elicit a remark or two of enigmatic import from him. After leaving and giving the words deeper thought, the people would generally discover them to be very beneficial.

In the middle of the first month in the seventh year of the Hoei era [1710], I shouldered my travel pack, slipped quietly out of the temple in eastern Mino where I was staying, and headed for Kyoto. On reaching the capital, I bent my steps northward, crossing over the hills at Black Valley [Kurodani] and making my way to the small hamlet at White River [Shirakawa]. I dropped my pack off at a teahouse and went to make inquiries about Mas-ter Hakuyu's cave. One of the villagers pointed his finger toward a thin thread of rushing water high above in the hills.

Using the sound of the water as my guide, I struck up into the mountains, hiking on until I came to the stream. I made my way along the bank for another league or so until the stream and the trail both petered out. There was not so much as a woodcut-ters' trail to indicate the way. At this point, I lost my bearings completely and was unable to proceed another step. Not knowing what else to do, I sat down on a nearby rock, closed my eyes, placed my palms before me in gassho, and began chanting a sutra. Presently, as if by magic, I heard in the distance the faint sounds of someone chopping at a tree. After pushing my way deeper through the forest trees in the direction of the sound, I spotted a woodcutter. He directed my gaze far above to a distant site among the swirling clouds and mist at the crest of the mountains. I could just make out a small yellowish patch, not more than an inch square, appearing and disappearing in the eddying mountain vapours. He told me it was a rushwork blind that hung over the entrance to Master Hakuyu's cave. Hitching the bottom of my robe up into my sash, I began the final ascent to Hakuyu's dwell-ing. Clambering over jagged rocks, pushing through heavy vines and clinging underbrush, the snow and frost gnawed into my straw sandals, the damp clouds thrust against my robe. It was very hard going, and by the time I reached the spot where I had seen the blind, I was covered with a thick, oily sweat.

I now stood at the entrance to the cave. It commanded a prospect of unsurpassed beauty, completely above the vulgar dust of the world. My heart trembling with fear, my skin prickling with gooseflesh, I leaned against some rocks for a while and counted out several hundred breaths.

After shaking off the dirt and dust and straightening my robe to make myself presentable, I bowed down, hesitantly pushed the blind aside, and peered into the cave. I could make out the figure of Master Hakuyu in the darkness. He was sitting perfectly erect, his eyes shut. A wonderful head of black hair flecked with bits of white reached down over his knees. He had a fine, youthful complexion, ruddy in hue like a Chinese date. He was seated on a soft mat made of grasses and wore a large jacket of coarsely woven cloth. The interior of the cave was small, not more than five feet square, and, except for a small desk, there was no sign of household articles or other furnishings of any kind. On top of the desk, I could see three scrolls of writing—The Doctrine of the Mean, Lao Tzu, and the Diamond Sutra.[3]

I introduced myself as politely as I could, explained the symptoms and causes of my illness in some detail, and appealed to the master for his help.

Cure

After a while, Hakuyu opened his eyes and gave me a good hard look. Then, speaking slowly and deliberately, he explained that he was only a useless, worn-out old man—"more dead than alive." He dwelled among these mountains living on such nuts and wild mountain fruit as he could gather. He passed the nights together with the mountain deer and other wild creatures. He professed to be completely ignorant of anything else and said he was acutely embarrassed that such an important Buddhist priest had made a long trip expressly to see him.

But I persisted, begging repeatedly for his help. At last, he reached out with an easy, almost offhand gesture and grasped my hand. He proceeded to examine my five bodily organs, taking my pulses at nine vital points. His fingernails, I noticed, were almost an inch long.

Furrowing his brow, he said with a voice tinged with pity, "Not much can be done. You have developed a serious illness. By pushing yourself too hard, you forgot the cardinal rule of religious training. You are suffering from meditation sickness, which is extremely difficult to cure by medical means. If you attempt to treat it by using acupuncture, moxacautery, or medicines, you will find they have no effect—not even if they were administered by a P'ien Ch'iao, Ts'ang Kung, or Hua T'o.[4] You came to this grievous pass as a result of meditation. You will never regain your health unless you are able to master the techniques of Introspective Meditation. Just as the old saying goes, 'When a person falls to the earth, it is from the earth that he must raise himself up.'"

"Please," I said, "teach me the secret technique of Introspec-tive Meditation. I want to begin practising it, and learn how it's done."

With a demeanour that was now solemn and majestic, Master Hakuyu softly and quietly replied, "Ah, you are determined to find an answer to your problem, aren't you, young man? All right, I suppose I can tell you a few things about Introspective Medita-tion that I learned many years ago. It is a secret method for sus-taining life known to very few people. Practised diligently, it is sure to yield remarkable results. It will enable you to look forward to a long life as well."

"What you must do is to cut back on words and devote yourself solely to sustaining your primal energy.[5] Hence, it is said, "Those who wish to strengthen their sight keep their eyes closed. Those who wish to strengthen their hearing avoid sounds. Those who wish to sustain their heart-energy maintain silence."

The Soft-Butter Method

“You [Hakuin] mentioned a method in which butter is used,” I said. “May I ask you about that?”

Master Hakuyu replied, “When a student engaged in medi-tation finds that he is exhausted in body and mind because the four constituent elements of his body are in a state of disharmony, he should gird up his spirit and perform the following visualisation:

Imagine that a lump of soft butter, pure in colour and fra-grance and the size and shape of a duck egg, is suddenly placed on the top of your head. As it begins to slowly melt, it imparts an exquisite sensation, moistening and saturating your head within and without. It continues to ooze down, moistening your shoul-ders, elbows, and chest; permeating lungs, diaphragm, liver, stomach, and bowels; moving down the spine through the hips, pelvis, and buttocks.

“At that point, all the congestions that have accumulated within the five organs and six viscera, all the aches and pains in the abdomen and other affected parts, will follow the heart as it sinks downward into the lower body. As it does, you will dis-tinctly hear a sound like that of water trickling from a higher to a lower place. It will move lower down through the lower body, suffusing the legs with beneficial warmth, until it reaches the soles of the feet, where it stops.

“The student should then repeat the contemplation. As his vital energy flows downward, it gradually fills the lower region of the body, suffusing it with penetrating warmth, making him feel as if he were sitting up to his navel in a hot bath filled with a decoction of rare and fragrant medicinal herbs that have been gathered and infused by a skilled physician.

“Inasmuch as all things are created by the mind, when you engage in this contemplation, the nose will actually smell the marvellous scent of pure, soft butter; your body will feel the exqui-site sensation of its melting touch. Your body and mind will be in perfect peace and harmony. You will feel better and enjoy greater health than you did as a youth of twenty or thirty. At this time, all the undesirable accumulations in your vital organs and viscera will melt away. Stomach and bowels will function perfectly. Be-fore you know it, your skin will glow with health. If you continue to practise the contemplation with diligence, there is no illness that cannot be cured, no virtue that cannot be acquired, no level of sagehood that cannot be reached, no religious practice that cannot be mastered. Whether such results appear swiftly or slowly depends only upon how scrupulously you apply yourself.

“I was a sickly youth, in much worse shape than you are now. I experienced ten times the suffering you have endured. The doctors finally gave up on me. I explored hundreds of cures on my own, but none of them brought me any relief. I turned to the gods for help. Prayed to the deities of both heaven and earth, begging them for their subtle, imperceptible assistance. I was marvellously blessed. They extended me their support and protec-tion. I came upon this wonderful

method of soft-butter contem-plation. My joy knew no bounds. I immediately set about practising it with total and single-minded determination. Before even a month was out, my troubles had almost totally vanished. Since that time, I've never been the least bit bothered by any complaint, physical or mental.

"I became like an ignoramus, mindless and utterly free of care. I was oblivious to the passage of time. I never knew what day or month it was, even whether it was a leap year or not. I gradually lost interest in the things the world holds dear, soon forgot completely about the hopes and desires and customs of ordinary men and women. In my middle years, I was compelled by circumstance to leave Kyoto and take refuge in the mountains of Wakasa Province. I lived there nearly thirty years, unknown to my fellow men. Looking back on that period of my life, it seems as fleeting and unreal as the dream-life that flashed through Lu-sheng's slumbering brain.[6]

"Now I live here in this solitary spot in the hills of Shira-kawa, far from all human habitation. I have a layer or two of clothing to wrap around my withered old carcass. But even in midwinter, on nights when the cold bites through the thin cotton, I don't freeze. Even during the months when there are no moun-tain fruits or nuts for me to gather, and I have no grain to eat, I don't starve. It is all thanks to this contemplation.

"Young man, you have just learned a secret that you could not use up in a whole lifetime. What more could I teach you?"

Notes:

1. This was a basic notion in Chinese medical lore. Cf. the statement in the encyclopaedic compilation Wu tsa tsu (Five Assorted Offerings, the section on "Man"), by the Ming scholar Hsieh Chao-che: "When a person is engaged in too much intellection, the heart fire burns excessively and mounts upward." Torei's Biography (1710, Age 25) lists twelve morbid symptoms that appeared: firelike burning in the head; loins and legs ice-cold; eyes constantly watering; ringing in the ears; instinctive shrinking from sunlight; irrepressible sadness in darkness or shade; thinking an intolerable burden; recurrent bad dreams sapping his strength; emission of semen during sleep; restlessness and nervousness during waking hours; difficulty digesting food; cold chills unrelieved by heavy clothing.

2. The samurai Ishikawa Jozan (1583-1672) retired to the hills northeast of Kyoto in 1641. His residence, the Shisendo (Hall of Poetry Immortals), is located on a hillside overlooking the northern part of Kyoto. See Thomas Rimer, Shisendo (New York: Weatherhill, 1991). There are several caves Hakuyu is said to have inhabited located in the hills behind the Shisendo.

3. The three books are intended to show Hakuyu's roots in the three traditions: Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.

4. P'ien Ch'iao, Ts'ang Kung, and Hua T'o are three celebrated physicians of ancient China.

5. Vital energy translates the term ki (Chinese, ch'i), a key concept in traditional Chinese thought and medical theory. It has been rendered into English in various ways—for example, vital energy, primal energy, breath, vital breath, spirit. Ki-energy, circulating through the human body, is vital to the preservation of health and sustenance of life and plays a prominent part in the methods of Introspective Meditation that Hakuin learned from Master Hakuyu. The "external" alchemy of the Taoist tradition involved the search for a "pill" or "elixir" of immortality, the most important element of which was a mercury compound (cinnabar). Once found and taken into the body, it was supposed to assure immortality and ascent to heaven, commonly on the back of a crane.

Hakuyu's instruction is concerned rather with the internal ramifications of this tradition, in which the "elixir" is cultivated in the area of the lower tanden, the "elixir field" or "cinnabar field," also called the kikai tanden, "the ocean of ki-energy," the centre of breathing or centre of strength, located slightly below the navel. Hakuin describes the terms in Orategama: "Although the tanden is located in the three places in the body, the one to which I refer is the lower tanden. The kikai and the tanden, which are virtually identical, are both located below the navel. The tanden is two inches below the navel, the kikai an inch and a half below it. It is in this area that the true ki-energy always accumulates."

6. A young man named Lu-sheng on his way to seek a career in the capital stopped off at a place called Han-tan. 'While waiting for his lunch to cook, he took a nap and dreamed that he rose through the ranks and finally attained the post of prime minister. When he woke and saw his food still cooking on the fire, he realised that life is an empty dream and returned to his home.

Extracts from WILD IVY, The Spiritual Autobiography of Zen Master Hakuin, translated by Norman Waddell. © 1999 by Norman Waddell. Reprinted by arrangement with Shambhala Publications, Inc., Boston, www.shambhala.com

Published in the November 2001 Buddhism Now."

I highly recommend the vase breathing practice which you can read up in "Open Mind, Open Heart" by Tsoknyi Rinpoche. In that book, Tsoknyi Rinpoche also describes similar energy imbalances from personal experience and how to deal with them.

Here is an excerpt from "Open Mind, Open Heart":

"Vase Breathing

One of the methods that helped this woman and countles others cope with emotions is a practice that helps us draw *lung* back to its center, or "home." For this, we use a special breathing technique as a tool, because breath is a physical correlation to the subtle wind energy of *lung*.

This technique is called *vase breathing*, and it involves breathing even more deeply than the type of deep diaphragmatic breathing often taught in many yoga and other types of classes with which people may be familiar.

The technique itself is rather simple. First, exhale slowly and completely, collapsing the abdominal muscles as close to the spine as possible. As you slowly breathe in, imagine that you're drawing your breath down to an area about four finger widths below your navel, just above your pubic bone. This area is shaped a bit like a vase, which is why the technique is called vase breathing. Of course, you're not really drawing your breath down to that region, but by turning your attention there, you will find yourself inhaling a bit more deeply than usual and will experience a bit more of an expansion in the vase region.

As you continue to draw your breath in and your attention down, your *lung* will gradually begin to travel down there and begin to rest there. Hold your breath down in the vase region just for a few seconds - don't wait until the need to exhale becomes urgent - then slowly breathe out again.

Just breathe slowly this way three or four times, exhaling completely and inhaling down into the vase area. After the third or fourth inhalation, try holding a little bit of your breath - maybe 10 percent - in the vase area at the end of the exhalation, focusing very lightly and gently on maintaining a bit of *lung* in its home place.

Try it now.

Exhale completely and then breathe slowly and gently down to the vase area three or four times, and on the last exhalation, hold a little bit of breath in the vase area. Keep this up for about ten minutes.

How did that feel?

Maybe it was a little uncomfortable. Some people have said that directing their breath in this way is difficult. Others have said that doing so gave them a sense of calmness and centeredness they'd never felt before.

Vase breathing, if practiced ten or even twenty minutes every day, can become a direct means of developing awareness of our feelings and learning how to work with them even while we're engaged in our daily activities. When our *lung* is centered in its home place, our bodies, or feelings, and our thoughts gradually find a healthy balance. The horse and rider work together in a very loose and easy way, neither trying to seize control or drive the other crazy. In the process, we find that subtle body patterns associated with fear, pain, anxiety, anger, restlessness, and so on gradually loosen up, that there's a little bit of space between the mind and the feelings.

Ultimately the goal is to be able to maintain that small bit of breath in the vase area throughout the day, during all our activities - walking, talking, eating, drinking, driving. For some people, this ability becomes automatic after only a short while of practice. For others, it may require a bit more time.

I have to admit that, even after years of practicing, I still find that I sometimes lose my connection to my home base, especially when meeting with people who are very speedy. I'm a bit of a speedy person myself, and meeting other speedy people acts as a kind of subtle body stimulus. I get caught up in their restless and displaced energy and consequently become a bit restless, nervous, and sometimes even anxious. So I take what I call a reminder breath: exhaling completely, breathing down into the vase area, and then exhaling again leaving a little bit of breath in the lung's home."

John Tan advised someone experiencing anxiety and insomnia, "[1:05 PM, 12/18/2019] John Tan: Relaxation and letting go is probably the toughest art to master in life. The best way is to learn breathing exercise to relax and focus on the pulsation of our palm... do not attempt to sleep if she can't sleep and don't worry about it too much. She can replenish her lack of sleep through short naps. We just need about 2hrs of deep sleep."

I also highly recommend watching this video as it teaches the correct posture in zazen and importance of abdominal breathing and the correlation with energy: **https://youtu.be/LL2XUTeoUsM** (Zen - Introduction to zen practice / full version - Taigen Shodo Harada Roshi)

Yin Ling
h15tmS1361ps7hrg8ecmgfh ·
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXnNbqK5oP4
Self massage technique for energy imbalance or blockages. 🥲😍😔
Sharing this. anyone who has ever face energy imbalances, and know how uncomfortable it is, will benefit.
I always have this problem ever since I started meditating. There's a few move that I have intuitively did to myself, like tapping my head to release energy, not knowing it's part of a known teaching 😔
May you all be well. May my energy be nice to me everyday 😂😅

youtube.com

Rinzai Zen at Korinji: Do-in Ho 1, Self Massage
Dō-in Ho (導引法) is a series of 54 body exercises taught at Korinji, divided into 3 sections: a self-massage routine, movement exercises, and breathing forms. ...

10 Comments

-

Bliss Rizal
I wonder tapping have sense. Have known it a few years only..... Can get the science of it. 🤣😂🤣😂🤣🤣😂Maybe you can shed light on it.

1 · 5h

-

Yin Ling
Bliss Rizal science cannot explain whatever happens in meditstion, 😂😂not even medicine... 😂😂😂😂if I go to clinic with this confirm they will give me paracetamol and admit me to psychiatry. 😂
But all these energy thing is true and real and everyone who meditates or contemplate enough will surely face some of them I think.but some people won't have it.. maybe their body can adapt well.
My teacher just tell me that I am a baby now.. rebirth. So the whole nervous system is rewiring and I have growing pains 😂😂

1

Reply

- · 4h

□ Bliss Rizal
Yin Ling somehow I understood. Happy continuation Sis, heheh....😊🙏

1 · 4h
□ John Tan
Very very good. 👍For the back head, pulling both your ears (20 times or so) as well as drumming the ears are very effective from my experience. If you are interested check 鳴天鼓. Taught by my Taoist teacher 40 years ago. I still practice them.😝

1 · 4h

- ·

Yin Ling
John Tan oh I will surely check that out.
When I feel very Uncomfortable I just hit my head like that 🤦‍♀️🤦‍♀️🤦‍♀️😂then something is release.
Can I ask from your experience if this energy is going to be here my whole life? 😅😅
I don't even remember how normal people feel 😂

1 · 4h
□ John Tan
Yin Ling maybe I will write something about it, it can be released.

2 · 4h
□ Yin Ling
John Tan yes please do. It will reduce many ppls suffering 🥹😆🙏🙏 · 4h
□ John Tan
Yin Ling dun say that. I also half pass six haha. Just 參考 can already...

1 · 4h

- ·

Edited

□ Yin Ling
John Tan if you half past six.. then.. the rest is half past one?🤣
Ok sure please write 🙏😆 · 4h
□ Yin Ling
John Tan feel abit like brahamasahampati ask the Buddha to teach 🤣🤣🤣
□ □ ·
Reply
□ · 4h

John Tan: "Meido Moore Roshi is an excellent and great teacher, there is no need to look else where. I think the Do-In Ho is good enough. However the following 12 points may help you understand better:

1. Although anatta is about whole body-mind engagement, we only know how to engage with our mind, we do not know how to engage with our body and senses.

2. So for this purpose forget "mind", just your body; don't think, don't contemplate, instead, "feel" and "sense". You don't have to learn about exotic yoga poses or pranayama, they are use to help open the body and mind more intensely. However for opening and activating body awareness, just deeply feel and sense and the (thinking) mind will be naturally quiet.

3. Mind has its language, mind has its memories, so does the body.
Hence learn the language and memories of our body. If we expand our body awareness, we will realize "body" is also "mind"; merely conceptually distinct but lack difference or sameness ultimately.

4. As a layman practitioner, don't use your mind to direct your qi or prana. That is a wrong approach. It will take 10 years of dedicate visualization in meditation to have a small success to use your mind to release your body blockages, but will take 10 mins for the body to do that. Use the right approach.

5. In addition to Meido Moore Roshi Do-In Ho practice, massage both ears by pulling them from the top of ear to the bottom 20 times. Then relax and feel the vibrating sensations.

6. Do half lotus sit, left leg over right. Sit for few minutes then half lotus sit again but right leg over left. Feel how they affect the mind states by these right-left-reversi postures.

7. Do the dhyana mudra with half lotus, hands facing upward. Right hand resting on top of your left palm for few minutes then left hand resting on top of your right palm. Feel and sense the difference. Sense the energy difference.

8. The purpose of point 6 and 7 is to understand, sense and be aware of "energy balance" in our body. Left handed people when cross their right leg over will have more energy balance. Feel the difference. They are different. It will help us settle the mind in sitting meditation.

9. Tap your body, slap your body then press and massage your body, feel the differences in sensation. Don't think, feel and sense deeply difference. Use your hands to first sense and then guide your body sensations by tapping, slapping, shaking, massaging your whole body. Open your your whole body awareness. Sensations are equally "mind".

10. Stand up with legs about arms length wide. Relax your hands then shake your fingers violently. Feel the sensations, feel the pulsations, feel how the blood flows. Do this especially when you are stress and feel the changing state of your tensions. Use shaking to guide the flow of blood flow and pulsing sensation.

10. Sense of touch of your palm. Place the hands on your face, chest, stomach, laps and legs and toes each for 10 seconds. Feel the "touch" of your palms. Feel the changing state of your mind.
You can also try rubbing your hands until you feel the warm of your palm and feel the sense of touch of your hands.

11. Learn and understand the basics of how the flow of blood, the energy balance, the touch of your palm, the tap and slap of your hands, on different parts of your body and understand how it can affect your own mind states. Don't read, don't ask, don't think, like an infant learning how to walk, be innocent, raw, pure and primordial. Learn these first hand.

12. Lastly take less inflammatory diet, it is crucial and and poop regularly (several times a day if possible)...haha.

13. Practice these for few months and tell me how your body awareness is open up and how it helps in settling your mind naturally by opening up your body awareness. It is also how one sense, activate and regulate "qi" and "prana". Integrate this with anatta insight and understand your "body" is equally "mind". When your body awareness is open up, in every engagement, you will engaged naturally with your whole body-mind."

Someone asked,

"I started contemplating seriously on the anatta stanzas/6 sense spheres, and felt close to a breakthrough.
However, since 2 days ago, my head feels extremely heavy with a constant pressure. There is also the sensation of a drill drilling from the inside of my forehead near the "third eye" area. Stopped all forms of meditation/contemplation, although any form of concentrative activity seems to increase the symptoms.
Not sure yet if it's a blockage being dissolved for realization, or an energy imbalance. Just in case, I re-read the energy imbalance section in the ebook 2 times, and tried Hakuin's soft-butter method, grounding (https://www.reddit.com/r/kundalini/comments/2zn8ev/grounding_201_two_effective_quick_methods/), and light stretches. Messaged the poster on Zen sickness for the qigong method, but haven't tried the qigong Youtube video linked in the ATR guide.
Anything else I should do just in case? If I restart anatta contemplation in the future, are there any countermeasures I should be aware of?"

Soh replied,

"Don't think or contemplate for now. Be somatic and ground your energy to the earth and do abdominal breathing

Were you overfocusing when you practice previously? Don't overfocus on anything particular.

Anatta realisation will lead to effortless presence that is the opposite of concentrative. Natural and effortless. So don't think you need to concentrate hard to achieve breakthrough

For example in breathing there is just the breath.. in hearing there is only sound. This is not telling you to concentrate deeply into sound in order to merge with sound. It is just a realisation that in hearing there is always only sound, never a hearer. No concentration needed or effort to "merge"

But don’t contemplate this for now, just relax.

In your practice you should be spacious and immense as the universe but light as a feather.
After you resolve your energy issues, maybe two weeks later you may want to read Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal

An excerpt:

“Moreover, a wide-awake state of empty and aware mind after making yourself intensely mindful, may be regarded as the meditation. Even though this indeed is the meditation practice, it is still imperfect in the sense of disliking a natural, free and wide-open presence of mind and, instead, preferring to focus excessively in an unrelaxed way.

It is, therefore, extremely important not to be confused about the flawed ways of meditation practice.
The imperfect ways of training still have the possibility of progress, but they are awkward to sustain and so involve the risk of wearying of practice. Through various ways of focusing and relaxing in all instances - perceiving or being empty, thinking or being calm - you must thor- oughly investigate and recognize, so as to find a comfort- able way to sustain it.”

You can get that book for $2 at https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/05/mahamudra-books-for-cheap.html "

Update, 2024 by Soh:

Avoiding Energy Imbalances https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/02/avoiding-energy-imbalances.html

Soh:

Important message for everyone.

The two stanzas of anatta (https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html) are linked to this: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/06/pellucid-no-self-non-doership.html

[8:40 PM, 6/9/2021] John Tan: 1. Dzogchen has a phrase "spontaneous presence". I do not know it's exact meaning in dzogchen however the phrase is intimately related to the 2 experiences of the 2 stanzas:

1. No doership = spontaneous

2. Mere appearances as Presence

You'll see that I wrote about both aspects in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/04/why-awakening-is-so-worth-it.html

Without realizing of the second stanza of anatta in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2009/03/on-anatta-emptiness-and-spontaneous.html , it is not considered genuine anatman (no-self) realisation in AtR. Related: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/06/pellucid-no-self-non-doership.html , http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/07/i-was-having-conversation-with-someone.html , https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/02/the-transient-universe-has-heart.html , https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/05/nice-advice-and-expression-of-anatta-in.html

I have also remarked that 99% of the time, people who said they realised no-self merely experienced the non-doership aspect and not the genuine nondual anatman realisation. Also see: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2020/04/different-degress-of-no-self-non.html

Based on my experiences from discussions with thousands of individuals, I've observed that claims of recognizing nonduality—where there's no differentiation between the internal and external, or an absence of self—do not necessarily indicate a true realization of anatman or an authentic nondual experience or insight. Often, there is a chance that the person is simply adopting specific jargon or imitating others, under the impression that they have reached a similar level of understanding. However, in reality, their experience may only encompass a sense of impersonality and non-doership, rather than a genuine nondual experience or insight.

I (Soh) have once asked John Tan if he thinks a certain teacher has realised anatta, to which John replied, “There is no authentication of one's radiance, no recognition of appearances as one's radiance and no clear pointing of how conventional constructs (Soh: are seen through and released). So what led you to that conclusion?”

Additionally, commenting on a certain teacher’s writings, John Tan wrote,

“When we say "Mind is the great earth", the first step is to understand and taste what is mind before we go a step further.

If the teaching doesn't teach and taste what mind is, then it is just beautiful talks and grandious speech.

Next one has to point out what is "great earth"? Where is this "great earth"? The soil, the ground, the flower, the air or buildings or the conventional world?

Then talk about what is total exertion they have been talking?

Then the integration of the mind and total exertion and that is +A.”

However it does not mean the second stanza of anatta is more important than the first stanza. In fact, after awakening the second stanza of anatta, the pellucid radiance as all appearances beyond the paradigm of subject-action-object, it is vital to penetrate deeply into the first stanza.

Everything self-arises without doer or agent, as natural as breathing and heart beating. Thoroughly penetrating this, be completely spontaneous and effortless and releasing. Natural radiance is completely effortless, 0 effort required at all.

Let deep insight into anatman and emptiness carry you into self-liberation and spontaneous perfection and dissolve the disease of effort and subtle overfocusing or clinging to radiance. As John Tan also said before, it is important not to over emphasize on the radiance (lest it causes the unpleasant effects of energy imbalance), and that it must be complemented with the first stanza of non-doership. He added that after non-dual, one's practice must be relaxed and open, insubstantial and free -- be natural and open, light, relaxed and effortless, then contemplate on effortlessness. The openness and relaxation should build up into a momentum in one's practice. Additionally, as John Tan said, we have to understand the relationship between non-doership and total exertion -- allowing the totality of the situations to exert itself. Seen from one side of the coin, it is complete "effortlessness" of radiance, and seen from another side, it is the exertion of the totality of conditions.

Satsang Nathan videos are a good expression of the non-doership aspect of anatta. See: Satsang Nathan Videos

To emphasize: building up the momentum mentioned above in practice is crucial. To paraphrase John Tan, "You must engage in regular practice and refrain from pretentious wisdom until a certain momentum builds. Only then can you hope to overcome challenges associated with x's issues. I am sincere in my advice; you have not yet experienced these issues firsthand, but when you do, you will understand the importance of mastering this art.

If you practice meditation consistently, both in opening up and in your daily life, a momentum will eventually develop. Even when challenges arise, if you can manage to stay calm and allow this momentum to guide you, you will find yourself capable of overcoming them.

It resembles the art of letting go, although it's quite challenging to articulate effectively. Our natural tendency leans towards attachment, regardless of how much we try to convince ourselves otherwise. This is why consistent practice is essential.

You may spend all day discussing the concept of freedom from all elaborations, the natural state, and sounds, and you might even gain some insights. However, when you are confronted with these issues for various reasons, all your attachments will come to the forefront.

Fears about death, health, and personal anomalies will emerge. Your mind will struggle to release these attachments."

John Tan also told X before, "You got good karma...just relax and understand that essencelessness also implies effortlessness, don't focus, don't concentrate. Simply refine the view and understanding after anatta insight that appearances are one's radiance."
John also wrote to X, a friend of ours, "Can be overcomed. I used to have very intense energy disruptions of energy imbalance post I AM due to over focusing.

Currently I think it is better to let the body and mind calm down first through distractions, shifting attentions...the body and mind at the very subtle level is very sensitive, the hidden fear will just sway ur entire balance.

Medicines do help and I think you should.

We must be very careful, there is relaxation of mind that lead to more alertness and there is the relaxation that calms the

mind into peace via overcoming afflictions (eg fear).

When we are in a state of later, then we can rest and response to conditions in balance."

John also wrote to me before, " Focus on "effortlessness" first, then later you release you can let go of ur thoughts and let what happen happens as happening...but you may later feel you are unable to concentrate, it's ok...slowly and gently recall that appearances are one's own radiance, then radiance is by nature beyond effort...get use to it first.

Whatever appears by nature self liberates."

If insight and practice is not mature in this aspect and radiance becomes strong, and one subtly overfocuses on the radiance, one runs the risk of encountering painful energy imbalances leading to stuck energy in the brow chakra, serious tension, headaches, insomnia (literally 0 sleep at night, super consciousness throughout night which some mistakes as accomplishment), waves of energy that feels like panic attacks (I said feels like because it was more of a bodily than a mental fear, it was a very tense and "nervous" bodily sensation running through the body), and worse symptoms than that. I've had such unpleasant encounters in 2019 for seven days, as detailed in https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2019/03/the-magical-fairytale-like-wonderland.html. This leads to what is known as 'zen sickness' which doctors will not be able to cure, and I have dedicated a whole chapter to this topic in the original AtR guide. I've been fortunate to have not re-trigger such episodes through a shift in practice but have seen others experience something similar. So, it is my heartfelt wish that people don't go in the wrong direction in practice. Please take care and practice well.

Perhaps if you are interested in Dzogchen, receive transmission and teachings from Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith (who also likewise stressed on this crucial aspect of non-doership and effortlessness of radiance appearances in anatta, and the integration of the 2 stanzas of anatta -- it is not in his public writings but in his online teachings to subscribers which I attended) and get the book 'The Supreme Source' which elucidates clearly the total effortlessness of spontaneously perfect and self-arising nature of total presence. But please do not DIY Dzogchen as that will be extremely misleading, but rather find good teachers (e.g. Acarya Malcolm) in that tradition. You can watch this YouTube video (highly recommended) for an introduction to Acarya Malcolm's Dzogchen teachings that was recommended by Sim Pern Chong on the AtR group: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/09/talk-on-buddhahood-in-this-life.html . Also, some of Malcolm's writings can be found here https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2014/02/clarifications-on-dharmakaya-and-basis_16.html . To practice that book "The Supreme Source", empowerment, direct introduction and guidance from a qualified Dzogchen teacher is necessary, and it is certainly not to be mistaken as lazing around without practice nor the nihilism of neo-Advaita. Case in point: https://dharmaconnectiongroup.blogspot.com/2015/08/ground-path-fruition_13.html

Here's a good video shared by John Tan:

Mind, attention, energy, focus, are one.

When you practice, especially awareness practitioners, who practice in a focused way will lead to an energy imbalance where energy get stuck in the brow chakra. It is very common for awareness practitioners. Either brow or sometimes heart chakra blockages.

However the insights of anatman by itself is very safe, in fact in full actualization of anatman, there cannot be energy imbalances. Energy imbalances are all tied to subtle selfing. This is why complete maturation and actualization of both stanzas of anatta (without skewing to the 2nd) will resolve energy imbalance.

So your practice should bring and base your mind on the Dantien. The energy should flow and not be stuck in the head. Being somatic helps with overcoming energy imbalances.

See Vase Breathing:

[11:46 AM, 9/5/2020] John Tan: I like his descriptions, quite good but may result in energy imbalances. Best is to practice breathing exercises and learn to regulate the energy into calmness...

Comments by Soh:

One good way to regulate energy through breathing exercise is to practice the vase breathing.

Here is an excerpt from “Open Mind, Open Heart” by Tsoknyi Rinpoche:

“Vase Breathing

One of the methods that helped this woman and countless others cope with emotions is a practice that helps us draw lung back to its center, or “home.” For this, we use a special breathing technique as a tool, because breath is a physical correlation to the subtle wind energy of lung.

This technique is called vase breathing, and it involves breathing even more deeply than the type of deep diaphragmatic breathing often taught in many yoga and other types of classes with which people may be familiar.

The technique itself is rather simple. First, exhale slowly and completely, collapsing the abdominal muscles as close to the spine as possible. As you slowly breathe in, imagine that you’re drawing your breath down to an area about four finger widths below your navel, just above your pubic bone. This area is shaped a bit like a vase, which is why the technique is called vase breathing. Of course, you’re not really drawing your breath down to that region, but by turning your attention there, you will find yourself inhaling a bit more deeply than usual and will experience a bit more of an expansion in the vase region.

As you continue to draw your breath in and your attention down, your lung will gradually begin to travel down there and begin to rest there. Hold your breath down in the vase region just for a few seconds - don’t wait until the need to exhale becomes urgent - then slowly breathe out again.

Just breathe slowly this way three or four times, exhaling completely and inhaling down into the vase area. After the third or fourth inhalation, try holding a little bit of your breath - maybe 10 percent - in the vase area at the end of the exhalation, focusing very lightly and gently on maintaining a bit of lung in its home place.

Try it now.

Exhale completely and then breathe slowly and gently down to the vase area three or four times, and on the last exhalation, hold a little bit of breath in the vase area. Keep this up for about ten minutes.

How did that feel?

Maybe it was a little uncomfortable. Some people have said that directing their breath in this way is difficult. Others have said that doing so gave them a sense of calmness and centeredness they'd never felt before.

Vase breathing, if practiced ten or even twenty minutes every day, can become a direct means of developing awareness of our feelings and learning how to work with them even while we're engaged in our daily activities. When our lung is centered in its home place, our bodies, or feelings, and our thoughts gradually find a healthy balance. The horse and rider work together in a very loose and easy way, neither trying to seize control or drive the other crazy. In the process, we find that subtle body patterns associated with fear, pain, anxiety, anger, restlessness, and so on gradually loosen up, that there's a little bit of space between the mind and the feelings.

Ultimately the goal is to be able to maintain that small bit of breath in the vase area throughout the day, during all our activities - walking, talking, eating, drinking, driving. For some people, this ability becomes automatic after only a short while of practice. For others, it may require a bit more time.

I have to admit that, even after years of practicing, I still find that I sometimes lose my connection to my home base, especially when meeting with people who are very speedy. I'm a bit of a speedy person myself, and meeting other speedy people acts as a kind of subtle body stimulus. I get caught up in their restless and displaced energy and consequently become a bit restless, nervous, and sometimes even anxious. So I take what I call a reminder breath: exhaling completely, breathing down into the vase area, and then exhaling again leaving a little bit of breath in the lung's home."

John Tan also said,

"Energy imbalance are very related to what we conventionally termed as "physical". Energies in spirituality are the "physical" aspects in our modern conventional usage, it is just lingo difference. So do exercises and learn the art of openness and effortlessness, open our body, be pragmatic and sincere.

Vase breathing exercises are all good but need discipline, persistency and perseverance, not some 三分钟热度. (Soh: three minutes of enthusiasm) When practiced with diligence with no magical or fairy tales mentality [it] will sure have benefits."

“[10:16 AM, 6/29/2020] John Tan: Mr. F is very experiential, no need to be too theoretical into emptiness, non-arisen of phenomena for now.

Rather it is to allow him to move the energy and radiance to his body...entire body...although the background is gone, you may think that all six senses are in equal radiance but it is far from truth in real time and causes all the energy imbalances.

Relax into the natural state and feel the energetic radiance over the entire body. Not by way of thinking. Touch anything, touch the toes, they legs, feel them. It is your mind...lol...can you understand that?

[10:23 AM, 6/29/2020] John Tan: The mountain is mind, the grasses are mind, everything is mind. That is through the vision and mental, feel the body, toes fingers, touch them. They are mind. So do you understand that in real time?

As for sleep don't worry too much, it will happen and use less thoughts, let whole body be a sense of touch not by thinking, but feel and touch it. So don't think that when insight of all is mind anatta arise, means you are already into all is mind. If you can't embrace and feel all as mind, how are you to eliminate the common denominator called mind and into no mind which is the natural state of anatta.”

Labels: Anatta, Energy |

Note: Serious energy imbalances related to depression and anxiety and traumas should be treated with the expert help of psychiatrists and psychologists, possibly with the medications as support. Modern medicine can be a vital and important part of healing and should never be downplayed. If you exhibit symptoms that may be related to these, you should be checked out by professionals.

In Soh's case of 7 days of energy imbalances in 2019, it was not related to mental issues as there was no depression, sad mood, or mental anxiety (aside from bodily sensations of tensions), nor was it related to traumas, but instead it was due to extreme intensity of luminosity - an intensity that persists throughout the day and into sleep, and an energy pattern of overfocusing and tenseness that was difficult to dissolve. That said, if you are unsure, it's better to get checked out. Additionally, you can also check out books by Judith Blackstone, which goes deeply into trauma release and relates it with nondual practice (although not exactly based on anatta practice, still it is worth reading). See: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2024/06/good-book-on-healing-trauma-and-nondual.html

John Tan also said, “There is a big difference between depressions caused by work or physical appearances or lack of family support...etc and issues for example related to "I AM". All those anxieties that relate to physical appearances or work load or studies etc will gradually release if the respective issues are solved. But there are issues that are like "I AM" that is your first immediate thought, so close and so immediate that are not easy to "rid".”

“Some (energy imbalances) may relate to opening of certain energy gates when body is not ready also.”

According to John Tan, to prevent energy, non-doership and calmness it extremely key. There must be a balance.

[6/6/24, 11:54:22 PM] John Tan: Yes don't let conventional achievements hinder one's practice and yes anatta is just the beginning, once we recognize appearances as one's radiance, we must exhaust both mind and phenomena.

Although I m not a dzogchen or mahamudra practitioner, I can understand and intuit the natural state of fully actualizing anatta as quite similar to rainbow body like kind of result too.
[6/6/24, 11:55:09 PM] Soh Wei Yu: I see..
[6/6/24, 11:58:37 PM] John Tan: In fact after certain degree of exhausting mind's reifications, we get less attached to the conventional and are very drawn towards exhausting our entire body-mind into radiance of lights. I do not know about others but happens to me.
[6/6/24, 11:58:42 PM] John Tan: Does it happen to u?
[6/6/24, 11:59:09 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Yes i think so
[7/6/24, 12:02:08 AM] John Tan: At this phase, effortlessness, non-action and non-resistance are very key as whenever mind reacts or focuses, energy will intensify and very often lead to energy imbalances.

(Also see: **Potential Sleep Disruptions** under the chapter on Stage 1)

Health, Energy and Somatic Practices, Yoga and Diet

Above: John Tan

"Be compassionate and free, awareness be clear like sky and boundless like space. Move in and out stainlessly without trace

and nothing will be able to affect a liberated man. Do energy practice to strengthen your vital energy and aliveness." – John Tan, 2015

[8:24 AM, 3/3/2017] John Tan: Nothing wrong with awareness practice, just practitioners will skew towards non conceptual clarity. However total opening requires one to see through conventionality understanding the DO and how it binds and bond the mind in a powerful and hypnotic way.
[8:25 AM, 3/3/2017] John Tan: Also awareness without breath and energy practice cannot effectively open up and release oneself.
[8:35 AM, 3/3/2017] John Tan: Pristine clarity and aliveness go hand in hand. When one is totally and non-dually aware, he is also fully alive and open. Experiencing one without the other isn't complete. Although many experience energy release and aliveness in non-dual awareness, they still skew towards clarity and do not know how to open up the energy, the "aliveness" aspect.

This is not a 'how to do Yoga' chapter because it is highly advisable to learn this from a good teacher with proper guidance. For example, the Dzogchen community of the Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche lineage has authorised teachers and instructors on Yantra Yoga. There are many yoga teachers and instructors on yoga all over the world. John Tan personally practices Ashtanga Yoga, an example:
[1:13 AM, 12/25/2016] John Tan: https://youtu.be/6zHzK3vGtFE
[1:13 AM, 12/25/2016] John Tan: Her Ashtanga Yoga is so perfect

But you have to start from beginner poses, by trying to replicate poses that takes years of practice will lead to injuries. It is important to not overstrain yourself.

"Sitting idly waiting for my next meeting, I wrote this poem to past time 😜 :

真实的财富, 只是身心健康。
执于修心而轻修身, 是大病。
见身本无身时, 身体也是心。
见心无心, 迟钝笨拙也是禅。
生老病死梦一场, 不要执着。
舍弃多余的有无, 傲游无境。

True wealth is the healthiness of one's body-mind.
Over attached in mind practices and neglect body is big disease.
When we realized body is empty of body, body is also mind.
When we realized mind is no-mind, even clumsiness is zen.
Birth, old age, sickness and death is but a dream, do not be attached.
Give up whatever that is "extra" (of something and nothing), And roam freely in the territory of no-dimension.

🤣🤣🤣！" – John Tan, 2020

Exercise, Diet, Sleep

Soh Wei Yu

Admin

· iSpongic2aag070fh1d ·

Tommy McNally:

""I was a fucking mess for years. Last October, I made the decision to change that once and for all: I quit smoking cigarettes, quit SSRI's, and started getting up at 0500, exercising, and eating cleaner.

On the 26th of July this year, I started going to the gym for weightlifting and cardio. Yesterday was my 100th session.

The difference that exercise, a better diet and a consistent, non-negotiable routine makes - physically, mentally and spiritually - cannot be overstated.

I've never mentioned any of this publicly and I'm not posting this for kudos. I'm posting this because if I can do it, then so can you."

- https://www.facebook.com/100055831473323/posts/326782622526118/

[5:55 pm, 11/12/2021] John Tan: This is extremely important. In fact you should encourage ATR group to do that.

[6:02 pm, 11/12/2021] John Tan: Instead of just always talking about ultimate, anatta. 🤦 .

4 Comments

- Данила Игнатовски

Totally agree. Ive been involved in calisthenics, workout and yoga for a 5-6 years for now and it gives A LOT to my calmness and much decrease pain in the mindass after some intensive practice. Push ups and something like this is great for home everyday practice if you dont like gyms.

2

Tyler Jones

I'm doing alright on diet and exercise, but "consistent, non negotiable routine" is something I really struggle with. Any tips for that Tommy McNally?

2 · 2w

Tommy McNally

Tyler Jones I had similar issues myself and it took me a while to find my groove. In the end, it comes down to repetition, persistence and overcoming the habitual addiction to comfort (which is also a useful vector for investigating dukkha).

An earlier bedtime and progressively earlier wake-up were where I started, because hauling my ass out of bed were the most challenging for me. I started out waking up at 0900 instead of 1100 or 1200, and each week I would get up an hour earlier until I was able to consistently get out of bed at 0500.

Waking up early doesn't sound like it would make all that much difference, but for me it was a game changer. Pushing yourself to do things you don't like doing (within reason, of course) or that are difficult for you sets up new habits and pathways in the brain. You're basically reprogramming the bodymind to respond in healthier ways to stress and hardship, which can make future encounters with difficult conditions more manageable.
It's hard to go from baseline to a brand new routine in one fell swoop, so I'd suggest changing small things gradually. Like I said, I started with waking up earlier; once I knew I could do that, it gave me more confidence to make changes in other areas, e.g. addiction, mental health, etc. Each time you successfully stick to your routine, you'll feel good about it and it'll reinforce the habit. Your confidence in your ability to make changes grows each time. One way of putting is "small wins, stacked daily" as each "win" feeds into the next.
The non-negotiable part is probably the most difficult to get to grips with at first, but bloody minded persistence is what will do the damage. Using earlier wake-up times as an example again: It's natural that you'll wake up, look at the clock and think "screw this, I'm going back to sleep", but this is where you need to intervene. As soon as that thought arises, that's when you remind yourself that you're changing your routine/habit and drag your ass out of bed. Doing this repeatedly will make it easier, and eventually you'll get to a point where sleeping past your wake-up time feels horrible. Instead of luxuriously lounging in bed, there's an automatic pull towards getting up and moving.
I need to go just now, but I'll try to add more when I have time.

6

Reply

- · 2w

Tyler Jones
Tommy McNally really good advice, thanks.

"Prana *(Soh: energy, life, breath, or chi)* and the apparent body, they are not related to mind, they are mind. Opening and regulating the apparent
body, is opening and regulating the mind.

Was very much inspired by some truly profound and insightful texts *(Soh: a Dzogchen text)* about vayu, body and mind that Kyle Dixon sent me a few weeks ago. 😳"

- John Tan, 2018

"Body is Mind

What we called "body" is just "Mind".

Massaging the body, is massaging Mind.

Detoxing the body, is cleansing Mind.

Feeling the breath, is feeling Mind.

Integrate the body fully in practice,

For the body has always been what we called - "Mind".”

“For non-dual junkies:

If you neglect the conventional, don't talk about the ultimate.
For the ultimate is merely the emptiness of the conventional.
If you neglect "body", don't talk about "mind".
For "body" and "mind" are merely distinct conventionally,
Ultimately they lack sameness or difference.

- John Tan, 2021

What is most important is how you can understand deeply the energy circulatory of your body and how it helps to expand and open our pristine consciousness... ...Body is a whole universe of itself. It cannot be just knowledge, it has to be intimate to the very depth. Intimate to [the] depth that you can feel no distinction between body and consciousness.

- John Tan, 2019

"In Vajrayāna, cakras are areas in the body where the venous, arterial and nerves collect, generally around vital organs. Where these channels [nadis] converge are areas where the vāyu becomes more concentrated.

The point of a knowledge of where nadi and vāyu collects is related to a knowledge of how to manipulate the body to in turn control the mind. The mind or consciousness, rides the vāyu. And actually in some systems, mind [citta] and vāyu are held to be synonymous, no difference at all. If vāyu is coordinated then the mind will be calm and pliable, alternatively if the vāyu is agitated then the mind will be chaotic with lots of concepts and thoughts.

Vajrayāna has a strong emphasis on the body for this very reason, and cakras are one aspect of the yogic understanding of physiology.

The ability to control the body and in turn the mind in this way means a practitioner of Vajrayāna can establish states of dhyāna and samādhi much more rapidly than systems that only employ methods like samatha solely to enter dhyāna." - Kyle Dixon, 2021

“Tibetan Buddhists practice *tsa lung* or *trul khor* which is pranayama, sometimes called “yantra yoga.” These Tibetan and Indian physical yogas are the basis for what later became hatha yoga and so on.

In Vajrayāna, the premise is that the mind or consciousness is inseparable from the vāyu, which is the air element within the body. The vāyus circulate throughout the body via the nadis or channels. As such, through postures and

breathing methods, you control the nadis and the vāyu, and once the vāyu is coordinated, then the mind becomes calm and pliable.

Some Buddhist systems emphasize sitting meditation, and as a result, eventually access dhyāna and samādhi. In Vajrayāna, through applying pranayama, that same dhyāna and samādhi is accessed much more rapidly.

In this way, these physical yogas as applied through the lens of the buddhadharma become a vehicle to awakening just the same as other meditation techniques, and when coupled with other meditation techniques, these physical yogas are a powerful supplement and method which greatly enhance one's path and practice.

There should be absolutely no conflict. If the conflict is based in doctrine, then study the Buddhist view and understand what you are doing... the premise isn't different. The point of departure is the nuances of the soteriological frameworks as u/animuseternal noted. In practice however, you are going to end up accomplishing the same result, the coordination of vāyu and mind." – Kyle Dixon, 2021

> "[3/12/15, 9:03:06 PM] John Tan: Actually when you practice yoga, if you got the 慧根 *(faculty of wisdom)*... you will realise the purpose of the asanas to prepare the body to fully open up itself. It is quite ironical because you practice to be natural, tender and flexible...but if you practice, you will realise. The body is tense, rigid and it can't relax and open up itself...it is similar to a mind full of proliferated views and dualistic tendencies going through the 7 phases of insights to open up."

You can't truly open your mind without opening your body. When the insights open the eye that enable you to experience directly, you must be able to directly feel and experience the supporting conditions that help to lead one to openness. And the body also requires certain mind state to complement your body to open up... your breath and posture and mind... All contribute and play a role... Have you felt your body so clean, cleansed, unobstructed and pure before?

- John Tan, 2019

In addition to the somatic exercises shown above, yoga and other energetic practices (which are also forms of somatic practices) are very helpful. If you are physically capable of practicing yoga, I will highly recommend it. But you should gauge your own bodily condition and do not overexert yourself to the point of causing self-harm and injury.

"John Tan: Yes you should learn slowly and safely... no need to rush... half a year you will see the effect. My sensations are very powerful now... I want to focus on this technique of mine for a few months... Anatta is very strong nowadays... Wonder why... lol

In addition to insights, the body has some serious obstruction that prevents full blown experience of no-self. When the intensity of sensation is strong, the transparency + insights of Anatta become very powerful and obvious... the natural intensity of sensations helps one to lose all sense of self too...

Soh Wei Yu: Intensity of sensations come from energy practice?

John Tan: Yes" - John Tan, 2013

[17/12/15, 11:45:40 PM] John Tan: I prefer you to understand your body system especially excretory system and learn how to purify the body from those metabolic toxic so that awareness is clean, clear and radiates.
[17/12/15, 11:48:51 PM] John Tan: If your body is inflexible, rigid and full of toxic wastes...lol..anatta though non-dual and effortless, awareness still is very restricted and hindered...
[17/12/15, 11:49:28 PM] John Tan: You must start look into your body...telling you for yrs already...
[17/12/15, 11:50:36 PM] John Tan: Anatta, openness and compassion is every moment of practice ... Energy practice is just 1-2 hrs practice...don't be lazy

"Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 2:50pm UTC+08

excerpt by eckhart tolle: " Close your eyes. Lie flat on your back. Choose different parts of your body to focus your attention on briefly at first: hands, feet, arms, legs, abdomen, chest, head, and so on. Feel the life energy inside those parts as intensely as you can. Stay with each part for fifteen seconds or so. Then let your attention run through the body like a wave a few times, from feet to head and back again. This need only take a minute or so. After that, feel the inner body in its totality, as a single field of energy. Hold that feeling for a few minutes. Be intensely present during that time, present in every cell of your body. Don't be concerned if the mind occasionally succeeds in drawing your attention out of the body and you lose yourself in some thought. As soon as you notice that this has happened, just return your attention to the inner body.""

Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 2:50pm UTC+08

his partner kim teaches qi gong

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 2:52pm UTC+08

That *[description by Eckhart Tolle]* is micro and macro orbit practice improvised...lol

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 2:52pm UTC+08

Just go with your breathing ... Don't just attention

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 2:53pm UTC+08

Means still from finger tip to toe...but with smooth and deep breathing from abdomen.

Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 2:53pm UTC+08

oic..

Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 3:05pm UTC+08

Joshua Ian Brown Here is the most concise example of what seems like an incredibly deep meditation as described by Tolle. If anyone can do this, especially in only the time it takes to read, then I would consider such a person a master of meditation. "Make sure the body is relaxed. Close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths. Feel yourself breathing into the lower abdomen, as it were. Observe how it expands and contracts slightly with each in and out breath. Then become aware of the entire inner energy field of the body. Don't think about it — feel it. By doing this, you reclaim consciousness from the mind. When you can feel the inner body clearly as a single field of energy, let go, if possible, of any visual image and focus exclusively on the feeling. If you can, also drop any mental image you may still have of the physical body. All that is left then is an all-encompassing sense of presence or "beingness," and the inner body is felt to be without a boundary. Then take your attention even more deeply into that feeling. Become one with it. Merge with the energy field, so that there is no longer a perceived duality of the observer and the observed, of you and your body. The distinction between inner and outer also dissolves now, so there is no inner body anymore. By going deeply into the body, you have transcended the body. Stay in this realm of pure Being for as long as feels comfortable; then become aware again of the physical body, your breathing and physical senses, and open your eyes. Look at your surroundings for a few minutes in a meditative way — that is, without labeling them mentally — and continue to feel the inner body as you do so." Just now · Unlike · 1

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 4:08pm UTC+08

Here it is more about dissolving the boundaries into presence which is not necessary for you. What is more important is the vital energy and how to regulate it. All these will integrate in a very powerful way later due to your anatta insight.

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 4:14pm UTC+08

Focusing attention for such a prolong period of time constantly in such a short period has the danger of triggerring a&p that are difficult to solve. Deep breathing in this case has to power to moderate and channel it to the body and create a very stable and heathy flow. It improves a lot of your stuff without much side effect in a healthy way. The rest will come.

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 4:15pm UTC+08

I am referring to Goenka's vipassana retreat.

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 4:16pm UTC+08

Before this happened I had heard vaguely of Kundalini, but it wasn't my intention. I think the word did go through my mind once the unraveling began, but at the time, I thought this must just be the release of Sankharas (which Goenka described as a sensation of like a rope being pulled apart) that Goenka had said would happen once we reached Bhanga Jhana or as folks around here call it "Arising and Passing". In fact I believe they are one and the same.

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 4:16pm UTC+08

What he said is not so correct. Bhanga is not A&P.

Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 4:17pm UTC+08

oic.. yeah mind body drop

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 5:25pm UTC+08

From what I read..all these are improvised technique of concentration from the 5000 yrs of Taoist microcosmic circulations...lol

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 5:27pm UTC+08

Because of the yoga stretches and poses the sensations are just there powerfully present but the concentration is smooth and not focus on there so safer...regulated without much side effect. But with yoga stretches and poses, the sensations are natural and direct felt sensations right at the bottom of the feet.

Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 5:28pm UTC+08

just now when doing breathing exercise i felt subtle energetic bliss

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 5:30pm UTC+08

You must keep practicing for 6 months and learn standing later...start with breath... Your anatta no-mind state will be vibrant 1 yr later. Presence will be strong and concentration will be there.

Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 5:30pm UTC+08

Oic..

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 6:50pm UTC+08

I show you a very difficult pose later. Hamspring flexibility and stretches are very important to have the natural energy sensation from the leg to the toe to the bottom of your foot energy center but because to reach the stage where you can be like the photo I send you, it might take you a decade...therefore later you must learn standing tip toe breathing to facilitate better. In fact the micro and microcosmic imo are improvised for that because attention and concentration to invoke the qi energy at these energy points are more accessible and suitable for all ages... You cannot expect old man or people at my age to start doing those asanas...lol. But that is just my opinion. Anatta will be naturally integrated into vivid and powerful presence..it is your default state...lol. Then go for yogic classes ... Will teach you later

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 7:07pm UTC+08

Lol. You might need 15-20 yrs for this...but there is a series of asanas flow

Soh Wei YuSunday, March 1, 2015 at 7:08pm UTC+08

wahh.... thats really incredible lol

John TanSunday, March 1, 2015 at 7:14pm UTC+08

Ur shoulder, neck, hamspring, hip all must achieve quite stable flexibility. It is a series of advance asanas... Lol"

"[10/4/16, 10:59:59 AM] John Tan: You focus on learning yoga and breathing exercises...it is a whole new world. Have discipline first and need a minimum of 3 years to have tangible effect. Currently your mind development is ok but your body and energy level understanding and relationship with one's clarity isn't there. Discipline, wisdom and willingness to let go are the 3 key factors needed if you want to go far. Not easy to have all 3 factors present.

[10/4/16, 1:01:20 PM] John Tan: Currently your cells in your lungs, abdomen are all not awakened. You can't breathe in deeply, hold and exhale fully like an empty pump... As you breathe deep, smooth and deep... your keep opening up your lungs... your muscle develop... your capacity to take in air expands. You exhale deep and empty your lungs...all these need practice... till you become fully the breath...as an on going process...till you are able to control and circulate...all these needs time. Similarly...concentration and focus in sitting meditation... Also needs practice. If you keep your focus, internal alchemy takes place...all these are not easy to explain but requires one to be attentive. So though a teacher's view may not be inline, there are invaluable meditative experiences he can share. You must start learning deep breathing exercises and yoga...then you will progress. Your mind luminosity is very much hindered after certain level... Dissolving constructs cannot clear your body hinderance... But go slow with yoga...don't injure yourself

[10/4/16, 6:24:30 PM] John Tan: Flexibility is one thing...blockage is another
[10/4/16, 6:25:09 PM] John Tan: Means you are not going to be a contortionist but to open up your body...lol
[10/4/16, 6:25:18 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..Hatha yoga more intense. Lol
[12/4/16, 10:10:19 PM] John Tan: Lol. You just go for yoga basic and yoga stretch. Don't haven't even know how to crawl, you talk about flying. Only on the ultimate realisation of Presence you have the experience but varies in intensity. Actually it is how to expand consciousness that is the ultimate aim...but the path is different so focus is different. Few look into the depth of conventions and dependent origination and how consciousness is being proliferated. Similarly there are also some aspects that need complement with the insights. Just treat it as health first and train yourself to have discipline."

Energy practices and yoga should be demonstrated and guided by a live teacher. There are actual cases of practitioners who did real damage and injury to their body and energy system by attempting certain energy practices or yoga postures by themselves without expert guidance. It is not within the scope of this guide to show you step by step what to do, plus there should be many yoga studios around you and even online videos you can follow. As for energy practices, you will need to find an energy master. At the point of writing, I (Soh) am still far from mastery or expertise in yoga or energy practices, hence I am not in a position to be able to personally guide or advice on the specifics of these practices, and I do not want to be misleading readers. Rather, I just want to encourage readers to adopt a kind of somatic/yoga practice in addition to whatever other practices one might be doing, whether one is practice self-enquiry or vipassana. Just make sure you do not overstrain yourself as many people have become injured by doing yoga too strenuously. Listen to your body, not your ego. Find a good teacher and do not go for extreme poses or push yourself too hard, safety comes first. If you wish to begin yoga practice, first start with the basics. Yoga is not a competition and do not let your ego get you - if someone else can do certain poses, do not force yourself too much just because you

think that you can do it too. Others may have more flexibility by nature or have practiced yoga for many more years ahead of you.

John Tan told me (Soh) in the past that the deep breathing that accompanies the asanas (postures) are even more important than the asanas themselves, although both posture and breathing have their importance in shifting our energy patterns. Although there are many yoga teachers out there, many of them focuses more on the asanas (postures) while neglecting the importance of breath. So be mindful of this. Additionally, one should practice vipassana, mindfully aware of the bodily sensations and poses while doing any form of yoga and somatic practices.

"John TanSaturday, July 25, 2015 at 5:12am UTC+08
Deep breathing exercises are important for health and vital energy. You are working more along the line of 精气神 (essence, qi (energy) and spirit) perspective. But many do not have the patience and 悟性 (capacity of realizing) to realize the essence. Youngsters do not have the perseverance and persistency to really practice therefore they cannot go very far.

John TanSaturday, July 25, 2015 at 5:20am UTC+08

It is like normal exercises, nothing special but you must dedicate an hour daily and practice for a few yrs to see the effect. When your lungs expand and your body is able to keep the air overtime... your body becomes tender and alive...when your inner muscle developed due to persistent deep breathing, your Dan tian will be filled with energy but it is an integrated flow. You won't be able to breathe deeply and smoothly now...because your inner organs do not have enough exercises. It is like having very strong core muscles except that it goes internal instead of external. Your internal muscles cannot just developed like that overnight.

John TanSaturday, July 25, 2015 at 5:26am UTC+08

You will also not feel self...you lost the sense of self into just deep breathing and asanas, into breathe and energy sensations, into the environment...into the universe...you can enter into total exertion from that too except that it is a stage and remain as an accessible experience. You too can get into pure beingness....but that is not the target for you as you have already gone through those phases. You only need to develop vital energy..."

"[3:47 PM, 3/23/2019] John Tan: The radiance is very much affected by bodily energetic pattern. Otherwise why one sleep? How does the cells become vibrantly alive? The clarity has its supporting conditions. Your radiance I don't think is even close to mine. Centerlessness is an important factor. But one must have right understanding. Your organs will fail. Your mind can still become fatigued. Drugs will cause you to sleep, psychedelic drugs will have its effect. Deprived you of oxygen will get you haywire. 🤣 But it is true that visualization doesn't work that well post anatta. It is because we are constantly in direct mode of perception
[3:52 PM, 3/23/2019] Soh Wei Yu: Yeah.. It used to be easier for me. And I always like to daydream when young 🤣
[3:53 PM, 3/23/2019] John Tan: When you get more and more direct, you sense energy directly

[3:54 PM, 3/23/2019] Soh Wei Yu: When I woke up I feel this energetic vibration through my body and then I know “oh the pce is still strong today” even before I open my eyes 🤣
[3:55 PM, 3/23/2019] John Tan: Yes. But in the past I asked you before about this, you already told me
[3:56 PM, 3/23/2019] John Tan: The clarity free from constructs is only eliminating part of hindrance. Not all. The body has lots of deep karmic patterns. Like I tell you to learn breathing, you must practice with diligence. When you breathe, it may not be smooth and rhythmic. When you inhale or exhale, there may be separation. In different asanas, will also cause different pattern to surface but many will not be able to aware unless they are very mindful. So on top of mental deconstruction, you must also learn how to release these deeply hidden patterns in our body especially when you are young.”

John TanMonday, June 8, 2015 at 8:38am UTC+08
It is like abdominal breathing... you can breathe with abdominal easily because you are so used to breathing with lungs. Even when you read books, you will later realized it is not actually about expanding your stomach and your lungs shouldn't move....

John TanMonday, June 8, 2015 at 8:41am UTC+08
Because your the depth of breathing and pattern of your breathing changes with your asanas...but it does not matter when internally your muscle developed through deep and long breathing exercises...just like you do walking regularly... Your muscle will develop but this round you developed those muscles and organs that relates to breathing...

John TanMonday, June 8, 2015 at 8:43am UTC+08
In order to do deep breathing, your core and Dan Tien must be like able to "pull" the air in and hold and then slowly do a deep and long exhalation...

John TanMonday, June 8, 2015 at 8:43am UTC+08
Then you will later understand the importance of it.

John TanMonday, June 8, 2015 at 8:44am UTC+08
You will be able to keep your mind also but it is not like anapanasati...

John TanThursday, August 6, 2015 at 5:15pm UTC+08
I will teach you... You must be able to feel vitality of life and energy... Your fingers and toes become "alive", body tender ... Dan Tien feel with power ... Breathe strong and deep into your Dan Tien like a single flow...this takes few years and is a on going process and grows with time....

John TanSunday, May 3, 2015 at 4:52pm UTC+08
Until you are able to breathe with your dan tien naturally and then your whole body... Your presence and sensations will be strong and powerful. your sensations will be felt vibrating

John TanTuesday, May 5, 2015 at 7:23pm UTC+08
It comes when you are able to feel the natural energy in your Dan Tien then from there radiates out... You will beam and your face will sure be rossy naturally with mild focus unless you don't want to let people know...lol...

[29/3/19, 8:31:51 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Yesterday Tsoknyi Rinpoche posted a video also mentioned importance of circulation of lung (energy) https://youtu.be/ZcB6iUsj25s
[29/3/19, 8:36:34 AM] John Tan: Not bad
[29/3/19, 8:37:35 AM] John Tan: Yes but you must go with your breathing. Let your abdominal be the base
[29/3/19, 8:37:46 AM] John Tan: Partice for a few months
[29/3/19, 8:37:49 AM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[29/3/19, 8:38:22 AM] John Tan: Next time we meet then I tell u
[29/3/19, 8:40:08 AM] John Tan: That is why I always tell you don't focus on your brow center in between your eyes, always start from your abdominal (lower Dan tien).
[29/3/19, 8:40:41 AM] John Tan: However can your body relax if you feel constipated?

[3/5/16, 6:56:16 PM] John Tan: Why a person lack clarity and energy? The importance of oxygen...but these are useless you feel it real time.
[3/5/16, 6:56:39 PM] John Tan: Unless you feel it real time.
[3/5/16, 6:58:50 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[3/5/16, 7:42:51 PM] John Tan: For you to feel it, you must first able to expand your lungs, your bodily cellular must increase the capacity, you must develop all the muscles necessary to take in oxygen and purge out carbon dioxide but that is easier to say than not. So you must learn deep breathing exercises... Your intake, your lungs, your abdominal, your cells will developed overtime. you will be able to massage and manipulate the air and blood circulation Because you are focusing and attending to them.
[3/5/16, 7:44:27 PM] John Tan: Now in the past there is no such biological knowledge...all is a feel ... A direct feel through the energy channels.

[10/4/16, 1:01:20 PM] John Tan: Currently your cells in your lungs, abdomen are all not awaken. you can't breathe in deeply, hold and exhale fully like an empty pump...
[10/4/16, 1:03:34 PM] John Tan: As you breathe deep, smooth and deep... You keep opening up your lungs... Your muscle develop... Your capacity to take in air expands. you exhale deep and empty your lungs...all these need practice...till you become fully the breathe...as an on going process...till you are able to control and circulate...all these needs time.
[10/4/16, 1:05:35 PM] John Tan: Similarly...concentration and focus in sitting meditation ... Also needs practice. If you keep your focus, internal alchemy takes place...all these are not easy to explain but requires one to be attentive.
[10/4/16, 1:06:21 PM] John Tan: So though teacher's view may not be inline, there are invaluable meditative experiences he can share.
[10/4/16, 1:07:21 PM] John Tan: you must start learning deep breathing exercises and yoga...then you will progress. your mind luminosity is very much hindered after certain level...

[10/4/16, 1:07:59 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[10/4/16, 1:08:11 PM] John Tan: Dissolving constructs cannot clear your body hinderance...
[10/4/16, 1:09:02 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[10/4/16, 1:10:22 PM] John Tan: But go slow with yoga...don't injure yourself

[26/8/17, 8:49:43 PM] John Tan: To take in enough oxygen, your lung and rib cage, traverse muscles, abdominal must all be prepared and ready. All these take time. Then when you breathless the long smooth power of exhalation will bring your into relaxation. Will bring you into selflessness. If you lose the sense of self, in one deep inhalation, the feeling of intimate "connection" with the different parts of your body as well as outside of your body will be felt...The "felt sense" will bring you into thoughtless total exertion.

[30/6/18, 4:28:23 PM] John Tan: Spiritual can help to certain extend. Medicine of course is important. It will be irresponsible of me to tell her this and that not knowing the cause. I do not know what is Neuropathy.
[30/6/18, 4:28:40 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Ic..
[30/6/18, 4:29:37 PM] John Tan: My way of overcoming pain is relaxation, refined insight, breathing and internal exercises that's all.
[30/6/18, 4:29:47 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[30/6/18, 4:30:54 PM] Soh Wei Yu: What kind of exercises?
[30/6/18, 4:33:25 PM] John Tan: Relaxation goes best with breathing and internal exercises. Overtime you will know how to use your breathing and internal mindful scanning and exercises like nauli to activAte energy internally and relax.
[30/6/18, 4:34:29 PM] John Tan: Means like use your breathing to expand your lungs and abdominal. Keep doing until you are relax and alive.

[18/8/18, 6:18:30 PM] John Tan: In anatta, we realized, consciousness and energy are just the same. If we separate, then we have to link back in the form of cause and effect.
[18/8/18, 6:23:38 PM] John Tan: Prajna is not just air but vital energy. To activate and regulate vital energy, you need to know how to use your breath as well as asanas. Using the basic of inhalation, exhalation, rentention and inversion to regulate them.
[18/8/18, 6:26:22 PM] John Tan: Asanas is not only about stretches, it is 经脉 (nadis) and breath. Each asanas opens them with breath. It is wrong to think that it is just flexibility and the teacher has guided and explained wrongly.
[18/8/18, 6:28:32 PM] John Tan: Like if you put both legs behind head, your entire abdominal is stretch also even beyond nauli. When you breathe in that position, it also activate your heart and crown channel in a powerful way, you open them.
[18/8/18, 6:29:25 PM] John Tan: you can't breath properly and takes a lot of time to learn how to regulate your breathing in that position.
[18/8/18, 6:31:16 PM] John Tan: you don't have to learn those things. In fact you just have to learn inhalation, exhalation, retention and inversion and be mindful of the your body awareness. In yoga you have very lil thoughts, just movement, breath and body awareness.

[18/8/18, 6:34:34 PM] John Tan: Learning serious energy practice is not about words, you have to start from young and learn step by step. There are too many things to learn about breath, energy, mind. Even you use your whole life you will not be able to understand...so start young.
[18/8/18, 6:35:07 PM] John Tan: When you practice, don't think, don't try to understand but listen to your body, it is different way of understand. It is body awareness, felt sense and mindfulness.
[18/8/18, 6:36:41 PM] John Tan: I call you to go yoga under guidance of teachers because asanas can be proned to life-time injuries if you are not careful. So don't go for exortic poses...

"A great explanation on body-awareness but still dualistic in nature, will not be able to fully integrate mind and body seamlessly. Nevertheless, still a good video. 👍

https://youtu.be/VGNDBGjF6hg **(Get Out of your Head - Awaken Your Body Awareness - Emotional Release - Empath Empowerment)**" - John Tan, 2019

"Yantra yoga is also integral to dzogchen practice. Malcolm taught that in order to attain rainbow body in this life, one has to do yantra yoga and control vayu (vayu is wind/energy/qi/prana).

Malcolm recommends that people practice yantra yoga. He taught that people of great capacity progress more quickly, people of lesser capacity more slowly, but this is a function of vayu in the body, which is why most people who achieve rainbow body in this lifetime, like Uncle Tokden, Norbu Rinpoche's uncle, they are also great yogis of yantra yoga. Because they have control over their vayu. And we do need to have control over our vayu. We practice yantra yoga as subsidiary practices which help and assist our realization. But if we don't practice yantra yoga it's also ok, as it states in the rigpa rangshar tantra, most yogis of Dzogchen achieve liberation in the bardo of dharmata, not rainbow body, but if you're very diligent and you gain great control over the vayu in your body, then you can have the possibility of rainbow body in this lifetime." – Soh, 2020

John Tan likes this video on Nauli - the music, explanation and her control - and practices Nauli himself: https://youtu.be/xcJquSsdIqA - Udiyana Nauli Mahamudra by Lila Poit

John Tan extolled the benefits of Nauli many times.

"You must breathe until your inner organs are activated... until you can feel the vital energy flow... the intensity of vibrational sensation throughout... then consciousness will expand and together with your anatta and emptiness insight, your experience and insight will be powerful and deep. Nauli kriya is not only a very powerful cleansing technique but crucial when you can integrate it with breathing control." - John Tan, 2016

"Energy practice must start from naval base... You will know why next time...now you still don't have experience of how energy moves...how is energy like at each gate and what is it actually...lol. you cannot just focus on brow and crown, not suitable for most.

Next time when you are back then teach you in detail. What I want you to practice is not just chakra, you have to experience qi, vital energy...as in full of vitality and aliveness...when I call you to stand with one leg and stretch the other leg out horizontal to the ground and put your iPad on your lap and watch video, you must be able to do it...lol

I want you to know your body relationship, qi and mind ... For example you have fear... You concentrate and think and think the fear might still be there...but when you breathe, spread out your fingers and feel the sensations you directly experience fearlessness...no fear and it cannot enter ...even if you think...y ... The relationship of mind, body and qi.

When I call you to think of the air moving to the end of your toe...it is not as good as tip toe, breathe in hold your breath for few seconds and breathe out and have your intention focus on the few energy points of your 丹田, 会阴 and 永泉. Like when I do split, I am not just doing the stretch or just breathing in deeply but I want the air to move to these few points...so I have my intention, strength and air on naval, butt,and both toes....

So your naval, leg and toes all must have control and have energy...then your presence can be powerful and strong esp when you are able to move, fill and feel the air in various parts of the body.

Chakras depending on what is your practice."

"But intensity is directly related to energy practice...lol. The insight of Anatta will break the reified constructions and artificial boundaries. Energies tied to mental constructs will be released.

You must do until you like to breathe from your abdomen first and it becomes quite natural...will take about half to one year. Then later go into poses."

"Currently your presence is not all radiances because there are body and energy blockages. But when you are able to open up your meridian in your whole body with asanas and breath control from finger tip to toes... Your body becomes no obstructions...your Shen at your brow is bright and radiance...means sometimes your thoughts are muddy and mind loses focus but when all these are open up, you are like a ball of energy (I really mean it...lol), presence radiates beyond body...but it is still I AM...later all these energies will naturally distribute to all parts and senses become sharp and entire body beams. Effectively all sensations and the entire body is full of vital energy and aliveness, senses are clear but no matter how one tries, he will find it difficult to break-through the body and "connect" with the universe because of the "view". In other words, not the bodily energy blockage anymore but the "constructs" are the next step forward to break the boundaries of the mind-body-universe -- the mind-body drops, anatta and total exertion is the next phase." – John Tan

However, Nauli is not suitable for beginners to yoga. Likewise, this is another video that John Tan thinks is a very good practice, and is not suitable for complete beginners: https://youtu.be/BEFOREY25_Vjyyc - Chumba Lama Tibetan Breathing Yoga

“John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 8:05pm UTC+08

Same thing when I do energy practice...day by day...now is already almost 30yrs...we must have this mindset in practice...this is then evenness in practice, no-practice...don't always think of short-cut, be like a tortoise, not the rabbit...lol

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 8:02pm UTC+08

Have a discipline and do regular practice...u look at Albert, from Reggie Ray to kun lun practice... Day by day...

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:53pm UTC+08

Yeah

Soh Wei YuMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:46pm UTC+08

What do you mean.. you said it leads to I Am? you mean the view lead to I am?

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:44pm UTC+08

Not that it leads to I m but the view

Soh Wei YuMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:27pm UTC+08

Microdcopic orbit leads to I Am?

Soh Wei YuMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:24pm UTC+08

Oic..

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:21pm UTC+08

It is better for you to learn the breathing technique I teach you which is not focus on the development of concentration and directing it with thought energy alone.

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:18pm UTC+08

One of the biggest difference between Chakra and micro/macrocosmic practice imo is the chakra involves also powerful visualization of colors. Do NOT visualize powerful color at the brow center especially when doing the retention practice, you will get energy imbalance issues at brow centre and can be very difficult to solve.

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:13pm UTC+08

Must like what I taught you to exhaust the energy through movement of the asanas ... But still energy can be strong after relaxation.

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:09pm UTC+08

It is the alchemy with the Jin as the ingredient through retention that gives rise to those experiences Darin Hamel described. What Alex is qi gong and Zhuang practice and energy flows external and more physical.

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:03pm UTC+08

It leads to I AM and thought form energy. I wrote in your forum something about that 10 yr ago about yang Sheng practice.

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:02pm UTC+08

Taoist's alchemy ... Longchen (Sim Pern Chong)'s father is the grand master in the Chinese martial art...lol

Soh Wei YuMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:00pm UTC+08

Oic.. lol

John TanMonday, March 2, 2015 at 7:00pm UTC+08

Lol kunlun is microcosmic and macro cosmic energy practice."

"John TanMonday, March 16, 2015 at 11:00pm UTC+08

Yes but although he taught the opposite of lung breathing, it is not necessary...what is important is long and deep breathe into it...later you will understand why when you are back. This is because of the various poses. When you raise your hand to the finger tips, your breathing will not be deep and natural ... But just do it...later I will tell you why. Then you do it again and c the difference. Practice regularly until your lungs and cage as your abdomen and your finger tips can feel the strength. The storing of air in your lung cage may seem easy but it will be smooth and tiring in the beginning but later when you practice the correct way, you will be able to store energy in your middle and lower Dan tian. Keep doing and you will be able to activate and regulate these energy centers. Do not rush into it and confuse urself with all those A&P descriptions. It must be healthy, tender, energetic and you will know...if you keep practicing the right way, you will know the benefits. My mistake is when I integrate into yoga, I injured myself due to various asanas as the stretches that open the gates can be quite tempting...

Soh Wei YuMonday, March 16, 2015 at 10:46pm UTC+08

oic.. on storing air and energy from there.. is just like the zenyoga dantien breathing right?

John TanMonday, March 16, 2015 at 10:24pm UTC+08

You cannot rush into it...

John TanMonday, March 16, 2015 at 10:24pm UTC+08

Many like to rush in energy practice and conjure up lots of mind states. Let's say deep breathing exercise from abdomen...what you need to build the energy from there, store the air and energy from there...ur legs and toes, your waist will be tender yet full of energy...ur mind settles and rest stably there and regulate...rushing and conjuring up mental states do not mean you are there or your energy gates are developed. For example, are you able to do a simple lifting of both your legs up toes pointing upwards with ease like I showed you the other time?

Soh Wei YuMonday, March 16, 2015 at 10:03pm UTC+08

ic..

John TanMonday, March 16, 2015 at 9:48pm UTC+08

In asanas and breathing techniques, you really need a master to guide you further. One can go for 15-20 yrs and ended up with all sort of injuries without knowing the essence. So it is important for someone that have gone the phases and willing to teach and share with u. Going for basic yoga class is good and learn step by step. Our mind states are far beyond what you can imagine now."

[12/3/19, 10:16:24 PM] John Tan: You need at least 2-3 years of diligent practice. Start with abdominal breathing. Don't think of nonsense and mystical stuff, just focus on energy balance and circulation. Use your breath to open and massage your internal organs. Treat it as a form of inner body exercise and purge yourself from magical thinking. Actually for circulation, if there are some doctors or masters that can help open your body by acupoints will be very good but you have to find one good and experience one."

"[28/10/17, 10:27:01 PM] John Tan: That teacher that asked those questions is quite good. Zen is in daily activities. Not in thinking. You need to meet situation and everything face to face. Same goes for yoga. You don't think. You face your body moment to moment. If you practice anatta, then body is no more body. Flux of energies...dynamic and have their own patterns. These can't be taught ... You have to encounter your so call body fully. The environment also. The ventilation in your room. Without the aircon do you know how you will feel in your room?
[28/10/17, 10:32:44 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Humid, hot? Depends
[28/10/17, 10:32:57 PM] John Tan: Humid and hot are concepts... lol. Even it depends
[28/10/17, 10:33:05 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Lol
[28/10/17, 10:33:06 PM] John Tan: Lol. When you open your doors and windows without your fan. How is it? When you turn on your fan how is it? How your entire body reacts... All these sensations are unknown to you when you are not mindful. But to some people they don't like to be mindful. Lol. For practitioner like me, I enjoy the changing patterns of sensations. So that you know how much your body is not "body". Your teacher emphasize too much non-conceptual towards non-dual anatta. You should mature your understanding and know your body as well. It is very difficult for me to tell you anything. But I can only tell you that you will missed a major part if you didn't know your body. Training of the mind is lopsided. You must use it to insight in all aspects. Like when you experience I AM and attached to it, it is just a dead pool of water. Similarly if your cannot apply your insights but just think of the

mind, it is very narrow. I can tell you probably one just ended up in thoughts and thinking. If you know that mind is not a background, in seeing, on hitting the floor... hearing sound... that is just basic. You must open up your senses and sensations. Most Zen Masters self-actualizes themselves but they can't tell you how
[28/10/17, 10:53:10 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Self actualize as in Practice actualisation?
[28/10/17, 10:55:49 PM] John Tan: Yeah in everything
[28/10/17, 11:16:37 PM] Soh Wei Yu: So how is it done
[28/10/17, 11:17:24 PM] John Tan: Smack your head. There is no how, it is inner blossoming of your wisdom in meeting situations
[28/10/17, 11:18:54 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Lol ic.."

Many people who hold tightly to the worldview of cartesian dualism - that mind/spirit and matter/body are separate and distinct elements - fail to comprehend the importance of breath and body on consciousness and fail to realise that these are mind itself. Failing to comprehend this, such people think that practice is about abiding as a split off mind/awareness/spirit unaffected by the conditions of the body, thus dissociating themselves from the body and neglecting the body. Such people are practicing wrongly by holding tightly to a dualistic paradigm that causes bondage, and preventing further progress in practice for themselves.

A conversation with John Tan in 2009 reveals the importance of maintaining a healthy body for progression in one's practice:

"(4:48 PM) John Tan: for Ven. Jue Xing, it is the mind body drop and the crystal transparency of our Buddha mind. How old is she? And what happened to her?

(4:53 PM) John Tan: to progress into another phase, it is important to do exercise... hehe. A healthy body for a healthy mind. After maturing of anatta insight, it is even more important.
one cannot neglect that. The body must also be able to support the realisation :P
(4:55 PM) Soh: otherwise like what you said the other time, it will be too intense or something?
(4:55 PM) John Tan: Yes. After maturing of insight anatta and emptiness, sitting meditation becomes not that important but engagement becomes more important, like practicing the 6 paramitas (Soh: i.e. generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration and wisdom. See https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Six_paramitas)
(4:57 PM) John Tan: But still need to sit *(Soh: John Tan recommends sitting 45 minutes a day, although you can go further than that if time permits)*. That is similar to 'dong zhong xiu' (practice amidst movement), the experience becomes maha sort of experience. Means her experience of mind body drop is being transformed into crystal transparency into maha, but it does mean that which state is higher or what... that [Maha] will be like Zen Master Bernie [Glassman]"

"Keeping yourself healthy and eating right are important. The longer you live the more time you have to practice the buddhadharma and benefit others. I'm at the gym as I type this. I'm on a powerlifting regiment right now, trying to

increase strength. If I was engaged in practices which require me to calm my winds I wouldn't work out. But I'm not at the moment. There's no issue with exercising.

...

...The winds are the vāyu, which are excited by physical activity, because one's physiological processes naturally become more active. In Vajrayāna the mind and vāyu are not different. If he vāyu is disturbed the mind will be disturbed. To calm the mind the vāyu must be coordinated and calm. All physical yoga revolves around the coordination of vāyu, then mind becomes more pliable." - Kyle Dixon, 2019

(Note: vāyu means the same thing as prāṇa, i.e. wind, air or breath)

In terms of diet, here's a pithy advice by John Tan:

"The food you eat... try to balance it... more water, more fibre... less meat and inflammatory food... listen to your body, be in touch with your body... till your circulatory and excretory system is clean and pure... it will help your awareness...", "To further open up, you need to have diet that are not inflammatory" (On Anti-Inflammatory diet, see https://www.webmd.com/diet/anti-inflammatory-diet-road-to-good-health) John Tan eats fruits (bananas and apples) and drinks oat milk for breakfast.

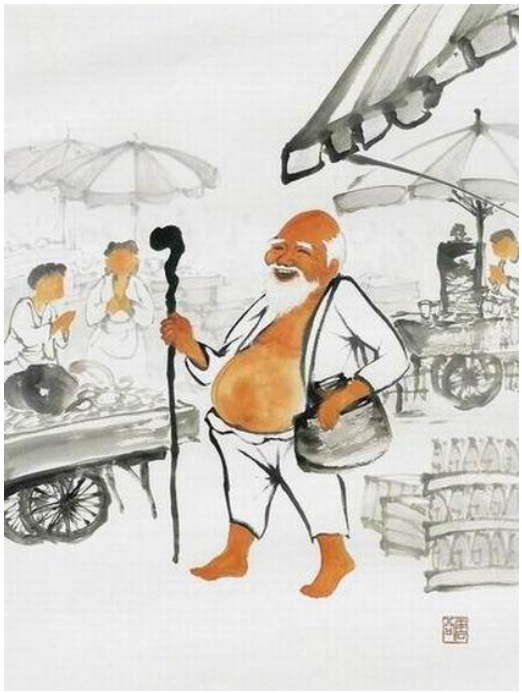
Fasting from time to time is also a good way to increase and improve one's clarity, according to John Tan. Plus there is a lot of science that suggests fasting will improve a person's health and longevity. "Intermittent fasting, if done responsibly, has some serious scientific backing. A 2016 study from the University of Southern California revealed that strategic calorie restriction may actually help you live longer." - https://edition.cnn.com/2019/04/11/business/jack-dorsey-intermittent-fasting-twitter-diet-trnd/index.html When I attended a dharma talk by Zen Master Chi Boon in Singapore, he told us his secret to good health and being free from illnesses lies in intermittent fasting.

For further understanding on the subtle body (energy) and important instructions on energy practices like Vase Breathing, I highly recommend reading "Open Mind, Open Heart" by Tsoknyi Rinpoche. Because of his relevance and Vase Breathing's similarity to the Dan Tien breathing practice taught by John Tan to me, as well as energy imbalances and the way of overcoming it is also pretty well described by Tsoknyi Rinpoche, I have personally attended a Subtle Body retreat with Tsoknyi Rinpoche Singapore, 2019.

"Hara's great. Along with a range of somatic practises from dr Reginald Ray it benefitted my own practice much in terms of developing stability, calmess and somatic grounding in the body, which helped me in turn with inquiry, analysis and meditating on instructions like Bahiya Sutta. Also I find dancing helpful as an energy, somatic and mindful movement way of practising (like vajra dances but also modern somatic dancing).
Apart from that being a Vajrayana and Dzogchen practitiober I use a plethora of methods to be found in these systems which range from pranayamas and yogic subtle body work through deity yoga, rituals working with symbols to

mantras and dynamic meditaitons. I guess I like variety and approaching things multidimensionaly (though always do my best focus on one thing or two for some time to have a degree of stability and conscientiousness). Some people probably need more minimalism so I guess its individual.
Also metta and the rest of the four immeasurables along with tonglen have been helpful and Ive practised these a lot just before breaking through to Anatta. Thusness advised me a couple of months before that to practice metta." – Mr. RDT

Entering the Marketplace, Actualizing Daily Life



Barefooted and naked of breast,
I mingle with the people of the world.
My clothes are ragged and dust-laden,
and I am ever blissful.
I use no magic to extend my life;
Now, before me, the dead trees
become alive. - K'uo-an Shih-yuan

(Entering the Marketplace is the 10th Stage of the Ten Oxherding Pictures of Zen. See this article for a good commentary: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/05/the-ten-ox-herding-pictures.html)

"When Dogen asked the zen cook from the Chinese temple why he didn't have his assistants do the hard work of drying mushrooms in the hot sun, the cook said "I am not other people". In the same way, we have to realize that this

life is the only life we have. It's ours, right now. If we don't do the cooking ourselves, we are throwing our life away. "Keep your eyes open," Dogen instructs. "Wash the rice thoroughly, put it in the pot, light the fire, and cook it. There is an old saying that goes 'See the pot as your own head, see the water as your lifeblood.'"

- Bernard Glassman from "Instructions for the Cook" (read some excerpts at https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/11/rip-zen-master-bernie-glassman.html)

The Platform Sutra by the Sixth Ch'an/Zen Patriarch says, "Buddha Dharma is in this world, awakened awareness is not apart from the world. If you search for Bodhi (awakened awareness) outside of this world, it is like looking for a rabbit's horn."

(佛法在世间，不离世间觉。离世觅菩提，恰如求兔角)

A Soto Zen (Dogen's lineage) teacher Shinshu Roberts says:

"...This would not be how Dogen would approach the practice of deep investigation or exhaustive penetration. He might be describe the activity of washing dishes as washing washes washing, thereby removing the subject-object relationship. Mindfulness may be a dharma gate to intimacy, but it is not the Zen practice of exhaustively penetrating the totality of one's experience. In the true intimacy of complete engagement there is no labeling of self or other that comes from paying attention to something outside the self....

...

If we follow this way of thinking, when we read that Zen masters express realization while drinking tea and eating rice, we believe that the being-time of their drinking and eating must be special and outside daily life. How could our eating and drinking be in the same league as that of a Zen master? Zen masters sit in grass huts, stillness radiating from the holy mountains that surround them, accompanied by the sound of a creek. Their tea is as green as the frog leaping into a nearby pool and their rice is infused with their enlightened nature. Surely they do not put their pants on one leg at a time!

From this erroneous view, we extrapolate that Zen masters are enlightened outside of the interactive arising of all dharmas, so-called daily life. Actually, Zen masters are Zen masters because they do not get caught in some idea about reality. Rather, they respond to the arising dharmas in such a way that they include the totality of each moment, thereby enacting realization. This is a fluid, continuous, impermanent response state.

...

Included in this intimate total immersion in the being-time of a particular moment is the simultaneous arising of all being-time. This nondualism is not separate from the relative or everyday. Washing dishes is not special. By entering

the world of washing dishes, we enter the whole world, which is our world, by jumping in with wholehearted effort." - Being-Time by Shinshu Roberts

...

Do not aspire to great realization. Great realization is everyday tea and meals.

—Dogen Zenji, Shobogenzo Gyoji

"[6:44 PM, 5/1/2019] John Tan: The 8 worldly concerns are the places you practice. That is why I told you engage in situations and events. Karmic propensities will not manifest without conditions. They remain hidden. Therefore last phase is always the market place. If you did not enter the marketplace, realization is not actualized."

(Note: on practicing in the midst of the eight worldly conditions, refer to Lokavipatti Sutta at https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/AN/AN8_6.html - in brief; they are gain, loss, status, disgrace, censure, praise, pleasure, & pain)

"There is the self that arises from conceptual reification, seeing through that with anatta insight is entry point.

There is the self that arises in marketplace, in day to day activities, anatta of that is graduation." - John Tan, 2018

"the degree of openess and effortlessness are a matter of wisdom in seeing through... and this seeing through is only actualized in moment to moment engagement.

We do not know how much residue is left until we meet conditions" - John Tan

"Andre posted another good article today about how the 8 worldly concerns in daily engagements relate to agentless-action, dependent origination and emptiness and all these play their inevitable bits in wearing off our obscurations. As the sutra explained, habitual obscurations are exceedingly subtle like scent left behind a container hence there is no short-cut to liberation -- it's all step by step and bit by bit erosion of the nuances and subtleness of "inherentness" in one's ignorance." – John Tan, Connecting dots, authenticating DO

"THE EQUIVALENCE OF THE EIGHT WORLDLY CONCERNS

Since all things, such as food and clothing, are empty by their nature, what is there for us to gain or lose? Nothing at all. What praise and honor, what insults and humiliation can be heaped on us and by whom? Again, none.

Examine the causes for the experience of joy and sadness. They are found to lack inherent existence. What, then, is there that could be unpleasant in being slandered? What is there that could be delightful in being celebrated? Nothing at all.

Let us cast aside all discrimination with regard to these eight worldly concerns and place our minds in meditation on profound emptiness.

As Nagarjuna says in his Suhrillekha:

Regard as equal, you who know the world,

All gain and loss, all joy and pain,

All good and ill repute, all praise and blame:

These eight mundane concerns are not

the worthy objects of your mind.

If an examination is made on the level of ultimate truth, the question arises: Who is the person craving and what is it that is craved? Neither has inherent existence. Since this world of living beings, if we consider well, has no real existence, who can ever be said to die who lives therein? Who will ever be born in the next life, and who was ever born in the past? Who, moreover, are our friends, and who our dear relations?

Let those who, like the wise master Shantideva, investigate the

nature of things fully understand that all phenomena are like space and elude the conceptual categories of "is" and "is not:' Let them regard as equal the eight mundane concerns.

~ Khenpo Kunzang Pelden, in "Nectar of Manjushri's Speech”

“Many people translate the fetter of conceit as 'pride', however, the fetter of conceit is not just in the sense of being 'proud'. I mean, pride etc is definitely a fetter. But also some people can be very humble, yet it does not mean they have overcome their 'I Am conceit'.

The 'I Am conceit' is more specifically described as a kind of trace, like a stench left over in a jug when the contents of the jug has been poured away. That trace of self remains after realization of anatta and then one has to liberate even that trace itself. That liberation of trace is Arahantship. This is clearly described in the Khemaka Sutta.

The Buddha said: Blissful is passionlessness in the world, The overcoming of sensual desires (i.e. anagami); But the abolition of the conceit "I am" (i.e. arahantship) — That is truly the supreme bliss.

Also, the Buddha said:

“The noble ones have seen as happiness
The ceasing of identity.

This [view] of those who clearly see
Runs counter to the entire world.

"What others speak of as happiness,
That the noble ones say is suffering;
What others speak of as suffering,
That the noble one know as bliss."

So what is the difference between the 'view of self' and the 'trace of self'?

As Thusness (John Tan) wrote to me in 2011:

"Thusness: if you do not feel the 'body construct' and 'mind construct', just the play of dharma, how does the sense of self arise?
AEN: It doesn't
Thusness: yeah... for me, it is just this dependent originated activity... primordially pure and luminous. sense of self does not arise. I do not see 'body' or 'mind'. for there is no agent. for you by now you should be clear on this experientially. otherwise, you will not feel the 'process'. you told me about the mini maha experience. so you should not feel the sense of self. logically when the agent is gone, the primary cause for these sense of self should also be gone. however due to the deeper dispositions, it continues to linger. when you engage in this modern world, it re-enforces the identity. so by seeing there is no-self in anatta, the sense of self should also dwindle. when you practice and there is mind body drop due to de-construction of body and mind. there is only purity of sensations. it is just a lingering trace. how does the sense of self arise? and that means it is simply a dispositions. and during daily activity, there is re-enforcing of this trace. when there is no agent, this trace will be seen as it is. in non-dual and one mind, this is not just a trace. you may have trace of identity. but 'Self' (comments: self-view; that a truly existing self/Self exists) is not a trace. it is as if it is truly 'there' and all there is. but anatta is different, for everything is like a trace, and self is not any more special than an arising sound, no difference. can you understand the difference?" - https://www.facebook.com/groups/AwakeningToReality/?multi_permalinks=2929740997067311&comment_id=2934284829946261&notif_id=1563655837243451&notif_t=feedback_reaction_generic

"To me, actualization of one's insights is like a lotus, pure, mature and beautiful wherever is. Peace is not sitting [with] nothing to do [while] appreciating sunrise and sunset 🏄 ... it is entering hellish conditions [while] not being affected like a lotus." - John Tan, 2019

[12:04 PM, 4/12/2020] John Tan: I hope this pandemic ends quickly, it is world war III in actuality.
[12:05 PM, 4/12/2020] John Tan: But it is extremely touching to see some people showing care to those that needs them. Even hawkers are showing.
[12:05 PM, 4/12/2020] John Tan: 'I'm losing money, might as well do good': The hawkers helping the helpless

https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/cnainsider/covid-19-singapore-hawkers-feeding-the-needy-12628574
[12:06 PM, 4/12/2020] John Tan: https://www.cnbc.com/2020/04/10/told-my-landlord-i-cant-pay-rent-due-to-coronavirus-how-he-responded.html
[12:06 PM, 4/12/2020] John Tan: It is extremely warm to read these kind of stories.
[12:08 PM, 4/12/2020] John Tan: You see, I want you to look into these in practice.
[12:09 PM, 4/12/2020] John Tan: Practice is not just non-dual. But to dirty your hand and still rising above them like the symbol of a lotus. Not disassociating.

"IMO there is no further, it is the depth of how deep and how much the self is released regardless of what path is taken. I am not a teacher, there may be other ways... ... Dealing with the mind, energy and awareness is a complex journey. There is the safe way and the dangerous way. The way is quite straightforward but the mind uncontented will look for shortcuts as it wants more. But that is usual... lol. There are those that want others to know about it and wrote about it and there are those that are not into this.

Soh has written a lot and visited many masters that can probably share with you better.

As for me, my path is simple. It is just plainly and simply opening myself in my work, seeing my family and children enjoy... ever tasting these natural expressions. I find them miraculous yet ordinary, others may not and look for more. So I am unable to tell them anything further." - John Tan, 2019

"Actually there is no forcing. All the 4 aspects in I AMness are fully expressed in anatta as I told you. If aliveness is everywhere, how is one not to engage... it is a natural [tendency] to explore in [various] arena[s] and enjoy in business, family, spiritual practices... I [am] involve[d] in Finance, business, society, nature, spirituality, yoga... 🤣🤣🤣. I don't find it efforting... You just don't have to boast about this and that and be non-dual and open." - John Tan, 2019

"Just met a friend yesterday who recently started meditating. His girlfriend joked that he might be becoming a monk. I told him that besides the daily sitting meditation (which is very important even after anatman realization, let alone before - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/12/how-silent-meditation-helped-me-with.html), practice is mostly and very much in daily life and engagement rather than in some remote region in the mountains, it is about living a life in the marketplace that is spontaneously beneficial for oneself and others around, and joyful, rather than one that is miserable. It is fully engaged and free.

Zen Master Bernie Glassman said,

"At its deepest, most basic level, Zen—or any spiritual path, for that matter—is much more than a list of what we can get from it. In fact, Zen is the realization of the oneness of life in all its aspects. It's not just the pure or "spiritual" part of life: it's the whole thing. It's flowers, mountains, rivers, streams, and the inner city and homeless children on Forty-second Street. It's the empty sky and the cloudy sky and the smoggy sky, too. It's the pigeon flying in the empty sky,

the pigeon shitting in the empty sky, and walking through the pigeon droppings on the sidewalk. It's the rose growing in the garden, the cut rose shining in the vase in the living room, the garbage where we throw away the rose, and the compost where we throw away the garbage. Zen is life—our life. It's coming to the realization that all things are nothing but expressions of myself. And myself is nothing but the full expression of all things. It's a life without limits. There are many different metaphors for such a life. But the one that I have found the most useful, and the most meaningful, comes from the kitchen. Zen masters call a life that is lived fully and completely, with nothing held back, "the supreme meal." And a person who lives such a life—a person who knows how to plan, cook, appreciate, serve, and offer the supreme meal of life, is called a Zen cook."

"But why does a venerable elder such as yourself waste time doing the hard work of a head cook?" Dogen persisted. "Why don't you spend your time practicing meditation or studying the words of the masters?" The Zen cook burst out laughing, as if Dogen had said something very funny. "My dear foreign friend," he said, "it's clear you do not yet understand what Zen practice is all about. When you get the chance, please come and visit me at my monastery so we can discuss these matters more fully." And with that, he gathered up his mushrooms and began the long journey back to his monastery. Dogen did eventually visit and study with the Zen cook in his monastery, as well as with many other masters. When he finally returned to Japan, Dogen became a celebrated Zen master. But he never forgot the lessons he learned from the Zen cook in China."

- Zen Master Bernie Glassman" - Soh, 2019

"In Zen, enlightenment implies full integration into activities. Any lack of such insight is not 'enlightenment in Zen'." - John Tan, 2010

"My daily activities are not unusual,
I'm just naturally in harmony with them.
Grasping nothing, discarding nothing,
In every place there's no hindrance, no conflict.
Who assigns the ranks of vermilion and purple?
The hills' and mountains' last speck of dust
is extinguished.
[My] supernatural power and marvelous activity—
Drawing water and carrying firewood." - Layman Pang

An old Zen saying— "Before enlightenment, chop wood and carry water. After enlightenment, chop wood and carry water."

Also see: a conversation I had with a Zen master in 2012, Total Exertion
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/10/total-exertion_20.html

2009 conversation with John tan:

“(10:38 PM) Thusness:
when doing work, focus on non-action. :)
(10:39 PM) AEN:
how to focus on non action
(10:40 PM) Thusness:
understand what is non-action first. then realize that it has to do with losing the sense of self in relation to personal gain/loss. that is not having the sense of self in work has a lot to do with full involvement but not concerning with gain or loss. then you will realize how the six paramitas is related to the insight of anatta. then meditation will take a different role for one that arises 'deep' insight of anatta. that is when engaging in content, you have to be egoless and free from personal gain/loss. when in bare, realize that there is no observer, no agent, just manifestation. then your practice becomes complete. however many practitioners do not understand the implication before the maturity of insight and cannot find the place of this anatta insight in daily involvement of worldly activities. thus arahat and bodhisattva
(10:50 PM) AEN:
the implication of what
in daily life?
(10:51 PM) Thusness:
the implication of how to apply this insight of anatta in worldly matters. even in david loy's book on non-duality, i did not see this insight. it is just like the experience of non-duality and anatta. non-duality is like a stage and it cannot find its place in all moments of arising. a practitioner even after arising of anatta insight cannot see this in worldly activities.
(10:54 PM) AEN:
worldly activities means thinking?
(10:55 PM) Thusness:
they are unable to see the link besides telling you there is no observer and attempt to forcefully link to it.
nope
(10:55 PM) AEN:
oic..
(10:55 PM) Thusness:
means like when you are studying for exams lah and when you practice bare attention
how do you study for exams?
that simple
(10:55 PM) AEN:
oo.. icic
(10:56 PM) Thusness:
so you cannot find or don't understand how the insight of anatta is being applied there
(10:56 PM) AEN:

ya i realise i was v mindful but when i play computer games like my mindfulness is gone :P then also when i was rushing to meet project dateline completely lost mindfulness and had a lot of anxieties.

(10:56 PM) Thusness:

u only know action without observer. you do not know how to correctly understand it in these worldly activities. so the 6 paramitas are taught

(10:58 PM) AEN:

icic..

(10:58 PM) Thusness:

it is like stage 1 and stage 4. where you find "I AMness" in all entry and exit. before that "I Amess" is an objectless stage. but it is more than that, it involve a deep realization of our inner most consciousness. however one is unable to see it in the 6 entries and exits. similarly one is unable to apply this insight of anatta in worldly matters until one realizes non-action. but being egoless does not mean he/she realizes anatta. but one that realizes anatta may not also understand how it is applied in worldly matters

(11:02 PM) AEN:

Oic.. that means one who realise anatta when they get involved in worldly things then they cant experience anatta? if they didn't realise non action i mean

(11:03 PM) Thusness:

yes

(11:03 PM) Thusness:

until they realize that both have the same experience :) then insight matures. :)

(12:42 AM) Thusness:

it has all to do with ownership

(12:42 AM) AEN:

what do you mean *in DO, not the aggregates, presence, self

*including contents

(12:43 AM) Thusness:

means see the impermanence, no-self aspect of content, not the phenomena, but the story, the content. get it? anatta is the realization that an observer does not exist. in thinking only thoughts. in hearing only sound. that is the phenomena. many after this insight is unwilling to re-enter into the marketplace. that is why i said it is only the beginning. the insight has to mature to embrace the stories and see how even the arising and passing content share the same taste as in the bare experience of sensations

(12:46 AM) AEN:

icic..

(12:47 AM) Thusness:

in bare sensations, it is the direct insight that observer does not exist in content, once we are free from gain/loss, the self does not exist, then we will have the same experience of non-dual in anatta

(12:48 AM) AEN:

this is what buddha meant when he taught

"Now, gain arises for a well-instructed disciple of the noble ones. He reflects, 'Gain has arisen for me. It is inconstant, stressful, & subject to change.' He discerns it as it actually is.

"Loss arises... Status arises... Disgrace arises... Censure arises... Praise arises... Pleasure arises...

"Pain arises. He reflects, 'Pain has arisen for me. It is inconstant, stressful, & subject to change.' He discerns it as it actually is.

"His mind does not remain consumed with the gain. His mind does not remain consumed with the loss... with the status... the disgrace... the censure... the praise... the pleasure. His mind does not remain consumed with the pain.

?

http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/an/an08/an08.006.than.html

(12:49 AM) Thusness:

Yes but you must realize it. not just read it but experience it from the insight of anatta, then you will realize one is on phenomena, one is on content. they are two different level of practice. :) that is why dharma dan does not believe in the emotional model. :)

(12:51 AM) AEN:

oic..

(12:51 AM) Thusness:

anyway that is for your knowledge. you have to put it into practice. i do not want to tell you because I do not want you to go around saying this and that without even having an initial glimpse of what non-dual is

(12:52 AM) AEN:

so anyway practicing in content means if there's negative thoughts or any thoughts just see it as it is without attaching to a sense of self?

oic

(12:52 AM) Thusness:

then start to comment about dharma dan and others. you don't have to worry about that. just practice the non-dual first and dropping. having the experience is one thing, from the experience then gain the insight. that is more important. DO will dissolve all. :) be it content or naked phenomena

(12:56 AM) AEN:

Oic.. "The Wisdom Eye may seem to blink initially. It may go through cycles of flashing open just after a Fruition and then slowly fading over a few hours (at least on retreat) as each round of physical sensations, then mental sensations, then complex emotional formations, then lastly fundamental formations such as inquiry itself move through and become integrated into this new, correct and direct perception of reality as it is." -- this is not talking about the content aspect right?

(12:57 AM) Thusness:

yes. this is seeing without the content, without the extra layer and reification. then you realize that the observer is assumed. it does not exist. then awareness is experienced as the manifestation that dependent originates. however that is different from dealing in daily world where we involved so much content and stories, so emotions continue to arise

and even an experienced practitioner will not be able to apply this anatta insight till we realize the non-action is directly related to the gain/loss aspect

(1:02 AM) AEN:

ic.. so is it right to say that after non action is realized those emotions don't manifest anymore?

(1:03 AM) Thusness:

then we will experience the non-dual in content and realize that once we are free from gain/loss, we realize it shares the 'same taste'. then realization will dawn. you can't say emotion will not arise just like you can't say sound does not arise, or thought does not arise. you just realized that sound arises, but there is no hearer

(1:06 AM) Thusness:

it is just the insight and you become free

clear, vivid, present, non-dual, effortless and spontaneous, similarly once you are able to be free from gain/loss and realize it from the no-self perspective, you are equally clear, vivid, present, non-dual, natural, effortless and spontaneous

(1:08 AM) AEN:

but you said dharma dan didn't know how to apply non action in engagement and hence he doesn't believe in emotional model, but does that mean after experiencing non action in content that means negative emotions stop arising? since theres no gain or loss there wont be desire, anger etc rite?

(1:09 AM) Thusness:

i am not sure. :) coz i am not there yet lol

i can only tell you there is a lacking of this insight. or at far as I can see, there is no clear insight on this aspect yet. but there is clear insight on the anatta and DO but the application on the content level, i have not seen yet. at the content level, especially as a businessman, I must constantly deal with it.

(1:13 AM) AEN:

so far have you seen any books that deal with this?

(1:13 AM) Thusness:

Nope. many actually just treat this as a form of practice because Buddha said so. :P

not as a form of insight. but that is just my view

(1:14 AM) AEN:

non action is not a practice its an insight?

(1:14 AM) Thusness:

how the experience flow to the content level. and then further apply DO on both, content and naked phenomena

(1:15 AM) AEN:

Oic.. so non action is not a practice, is the application of DO insight on content?

(1:16 AM) Thusness:

u can't say so. i am just borrowing a taoist term for you to understand how to apply it at the content level. if i were to tell you DO, then it doesn't matter at all. but you will not gain the insight that it is two different level of practice and involve two different realizations

Session Start: Friday, 11 September, 2009

(3:38 PM) AEN:
can one experience nondual when engaged in contents?
(3:54 PM) Thusness:
first you must have the insight of anatta until you have vivid experience of non-dual effortlessly
otherwise you do not know what you are talking and discussing and what is meant by content
(3:55 PM) AEN:
content are just stories right. i have never experienced nondual when engaging in contents... only with bare sensations
(3:57 PM) Thusness:
when you are only at the very surface of your experience, you want to know experience that are even beyond those advance practitioners, you will only mislead others and yourself. what you have to do is to 'taste' non-dual first and then arise the insight of anatta till you are so clear what non-dual is about. then when you have content and realize that you do not have what sort of attachments, you have the same sort of experiences...and gradually you will mature your insight. there are certain sensations that come after the maturing of anatta insight. you must be thoroughly clear first. when insight initially arises, I told you it might not last more than 60-90 days before the tendencies step in, then it becomes ordinary like what longchen said. gradually it becomes effortless, spontaneous; completely without center and simply DO yet there are always content. then you understand DO better. when you meet life experiences and faced all sorts of problems like dharma dan, you will arise this sort of question. how is insight of anatta going to be applied when there are stories. when we are engaged in worldly matters when we are in dreams. that requires very deep wisdom before you can really understand.
(4:05 PM) AEN:
Oic.. i think i can remain a witnessing when thoughts arise but if very engaged in thoughts even that is lost, though i don't think thats nondual with thoughts
(4:07 PM) Thusness:
that is because you have not understood what anatta really mean and directly experienced the truth of it. when insight arises, you will know why it is effortless. yet after that, after 60-90 days, the tendency steps in. then you must be very clear of this tendency and understand it affects you. so mature your experience of non-dual and meditate on the stanza of what I have written in stage 4. so that insight of anatta may arise. then go through life experiences, face all sorts of problems.
like what longchen is undergoing now and like revisit your insight of anatta and DO
(4:12 PM) AEN:
oic.."

"Soh Wei YuSunday, April 21, 2013 at 11:38pm UTC+10

facing all kinds of stuff in life and yet experiencing the three characteristics of self-liberation like you said, "non-duality, non-attachment and fearlessness" is how I understand dong zhong xiu (practice amidst movement) now
John TanSunday, April 21, 2013 at 11:39pm UTC+10

yes but with the direct and intuitive knowledge that there is no you facing anything, it is the entire universe facing it. it is like all the phases of your insights actualized in this conventional world.
means when say talking to my children, it is neither me nor him... it is one activity
like I talk to you, it does not mean that soh does not exist.
it is just no thusness or soh, only the question on hand that makes up the situation... or when you talking to your teacher, no teacher or student relationship... just a single activity... get it?
teacher is not teacher, student not student... teacher becomes the student, the student becomes the teacher, the teacher is the teacher, the student is the student, no teacher, no student...all as one activity...
everything interpenetrates, everything interdefines, there is no everything... when eyes are open.. .the spontaneous presence of scenery... no seer, no seeing, no seen... seer is the seeing is the seen... just this, the entire movement.
this must be your moment to moment encounter in mundane activity.
deconstruct self, deconstruct physical, deconstruct external, deconstruct internal... be free from all arbitrary definitions and stories... then whatever experience is neither physical nor mental nor spiritual... just direct, non-conceptual as it is state of self arising... be free from all arbitrary thoughts and definitions... don't let 'yourself' be troubled by all these so that this activity is unobstructed and uncontrived in clean purity... then experience will be transparent and total."

Watch this: Man on Cloud Mountain | Shodo Harada Roshi in America https://youtu.be/7PswxXmm-OA

"(9:53 PM) AEN: but whats the difference between the two articles
(9:54 PM) Thusness: the analogy is something like this. the first one is like dealing with existing karma but only the realisation not really right but there is not much danger of creating more unnecessary karma. the 2nd one is not only creating extra karma but deal with it wrongly and creates more karma. like an endless loop
(9:56 PM) AEN: huh how come? so I should post the other one instead? lol
(9:57 PM) Thusness: like teacher C he is in the midst of retreating. due to some reasons and he is clearly not accumulating anything extra. she should retire when the time is right and practice hard. it is not easy to go through engagement and yet want to realise self-liberation this way. it is all thoughts. this is not self-liberation. so b4 the true realisation of self-liberation, it is best to lessen these activities though we still can be a lay...but lessen these activities. until correct realisation is attained, and continue to refine the experience, then dirty urself in the mud later.
means self-liberation aspect is seen, one can dirty himself. but not kept dirtying oneself unknowingly. if she understood by six paramitas in daily life, then that is better. and more applicable. like ren ru (patience). just practice hard." - a warning or note of caution by John Tan in 2007

Traditional Buddhist Attainments: Arahantship and Buddhahood

(Also see: What is Nirvana?, Great Resource of Buddha's Teachings, The Deathless in Buddhadharma?, The Meaning of Nirvana, The Island: An Anthology of the Buddha's Teachings on Nibbana, [insight] [buddhism] A

reconsideration of the meaning of "Stream-Entry" considering the data points of both pragmatic Dharma and traditional Buddhism , Definition of First Bhumi)

"Friend Sariputta, it is said, 'arahantship, arahantship.' What now is arahantship?"

"The destruction of lust, the destruction of hatred, the destruction of delusion: this, friend, is called arahantship."

"But, friend, is there a path, is there a way for the realization of this arahantship?"

"There is a path, friend, there is a way for the realization of this arahantship."

"And what, friend, is that path, what is that way for the realization of this arahantship?"

"It is, friend, this Noble Eightfold Path; that is,

Right view (Samma ditthi)
Right thought (Samma sankappa)
Right speech (Samma vaca)
Right action (Samma kammanta)
Right livelihood (Samma ajiva)
Right effort (Samma vayama)
Right mindfulness (Samma sati)
Right concentration (Samma samadhi)
This is the path, friend, this is the way for the realization of this arahantship."

"Excellent is the path, friend, excellent is the way for the realization of this arahantship. And it is enough, friend Sariputta, for diligence."

- The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya by Bhikkhu Bodhi

tl/dr：” Christine Walsh asked a question .

Are there things we all assume beings would do if they are realized? Do we assume they would act in a certain way? Why or why not? Is this even relevant within the context of Anatta realization?

Soh replied:

Unlike Daniel Ingram who utterly rejects the literal fetter model as taught by Buddha, I accept the literal fetter model. Buddhahood is the fetter model plus elimination of the knowledge obscurations.
The implication is this: all unwholesome behaviours result from afflictions which are driven by self grasping and ignorance. With the cessation of ignorance, the three poisons cease and the related behaviours stop.

We see this in varying degrees in one's practice and experience along the path. Afflictions do get reduced and removed. Hence it would not make sense to assert that the literal fetter model arahant does not exist."

There is a teaching by Buddha on how to test if someone is an arahant: https://suttacentral.net/mn112/en/sujato
On distinguishing the difference in attainment between an Arahat or Pratyekabuddha and a Buddha, the Mahayana scripture Lankavatara Sutra states, "...Therefore, Mahamati, the assurances given to shravakas and bodhisattvas do not differ. Mahamati, what doesn't differ is the taste of liberation when shravakas and pratyeka-buddhas or buddhas and tathagatas get rid of the obstruction of passion, not when they get rid of the obstruction of knowledge. Mahamati, the obstruction of knowledge is purified when they see that dharmas have no self. The obstruction of passion is removed prior to this when they become accustomed to seeing that persons have no self. It is when the seventh consciousness ceases that they are liberated from the obstruction of dharmas. And it is when the habit-energy of the repository consciousness ceases that their purification is complete."

"[To attain Buddhahood], you must free [yourself] from 2 obscurations and 4 mara." – John Tan, 2020

"According to Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna there are two obscurations that prevent us from fully knowing the nature of phenomena. The first is called the afflictive obscuration, which is the fetter of an internal subjective reference point that the self is attributed to, and the second is called the cognitive obscuration, which is everything else that stands apart from our deluded sense of self, so all objects; persons, places, things.

For some reason these obscurations can be uprooted at different times." – Kyle Dixon, 2021

Someone thought that Buddhahood is an athletic project. Soh replied, "Buddhahood is not an athletic project but the elimination of the twin obscurations*. Several years ago, John Tan had a series of breakthroughs and he told me he had very little knowledge obscurations left after that. (He is not claiming some sort of finality) And that is over a decade after he wrote the 7 stages, etc. So there is plenty more to unfold and anatta is just a beginning.
After anatta, it will be good to look into this https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/08/compilation-of-post-anatta-advise.html and

https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Two_obscurations

Two obscurations (Tib. སྒྲིབ་པ་གཉིས་, dribpa nyi; Wyl. sgrib pa gnyis) — emotional and cognitive obscurations.
● Emotional obscurations are defined according to their essence, cause and function.
In essence, they are the opposite of the six paramitas, as described in the Gyü Lama:
"Thoughts such as avarice and so on,
These are the emotional obscurations."
Their cause is grasping at a personal ego, or the "self of the individual".
They function to prevent liberation from samsara.
● Cognitive obscurations are also defined according to their essence, cause and function.
In essence, they are thoughts that involve the three conceptual 'spheres' of subject, object and action. The Gyü Lama says:
"Thoughts that involve the three spheres,
These are the cognitive obscurations."

Their cause is grasping at phenomena as truly existent, or, in other words, the "self of phenomena".
Their function is to prevent complete enlightenment."

On the four maras,

"According to Sutrayana

1. the **mara of the aggregates** (Skt. *skandhamāra*; Tib. ཕུང་པོའི་བདུད་, Wyl. *phung po'i bdud*), which symbolizes our clinging to forms, perceptions, and mental states as 'real';
2. the **mara of the destructive emotions** (Skt. *kleśamāra*; Tib. ཉོན་མོངས་ཀྱི་བདུད་, Wyl. *nyon mongs kyi bdud*), which symbolizes our addiction to habitual patterns of negative emotion;
3. the **mara of the Lord of Death** (Skt. *mṛtyumāra*; Tib. འཆི་བདག་གི་བདུད་, Wyl. *'chi bdag gi bdud*), which symbolizes both death itself, which cuts short our precious human birth, and also our fear of change, impermanence, and death; and
4. the **mara of the sons of the gods** (Skt. *devaputramāra*; Tib. ལྷའི་བུའི་བདུད་, Wyl. *lha'i bu'i bdud*), which symbolizes our craving for pleasure, convenience, and 'peace'.

The Great Tibetan Dictionary gives the following descriptions:

1. The mara of the aggregates prevents one from accomplishing virtue, since if one possesses the aggregates (created by karma and destructive emotions), then one falls under the sway of sickness, aging and decay; the conditions preventing one from accomplishing virtue.
2. The mara of the destructive emotions prevents one from accomplishing virtue, since one is under the power of destructive emotions such as desire and anger. The coarse mara of the destructive emotions are the root and subsidiary destructive emotions. The subtle mara of the destructive emotions are for example the emotional habitual tendencies in the mind of an arhat.
3. The mara of the Lord of Death causes one to be powerless regarding the ceasing of the life-force faculty.
4. The mara of the sons of the gods prevent one from accomplishing virtue through the jealousy of the desire realm's sons of the gods. The coarse mara of the sons of the gods is Garab Wangchuk (kāmadeva), the lord of the realm *Controlling Others' Emanations*. The subtle mara of the sons of the gods is for example distraction which makes one unable to overcome any of the first three maras." - https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Four_maras

"Clearing intellectual obscurity actually requires quite some shamata concentration that enables the mind to see clearly experience and how the conceptual mind process in a slow motion. It is like anatta but more complex issues are seen clearly in real time.

...

One can be free from subject and object division in experience, but one may not be free from mind-matter duality. There is intellectual mind/matter duality block despite experience being non-dual and anatta. Freedom from duality in

experience does not mean you are free from mind/matter duality and the relationship between them." – John Tan, 2020

"Now having non-dual experience or a state of no-mind does not mean finality. We must also free ourselves from many more intellectual obscurations. other obscurations of cause. Like having non-dual or no-mind may not free on from the notion of self. Freeing one from the notion of self, may not free one from the notion of cause. Freeing one from the notion of cause, may not free one from the notion of existence. Freeing one from duality, may not free one from non-duality. The color you see is neither inside, nor outside. It is inside, it is also outside. It is private, it is also public.

So it is neither too." – John Tan, 2020

"Before anyone can hope to overcome emotional and mental afflictions or knowledge obscurations, they must have given rise to all the insights in Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment , but this is not the end, they must cultivate meditative equipoise and samadhi conjoined with insight and then tune them up ever more until all traces of mental afflictions/kleshas/defilements are burned off in the light of prajna forever. See Buddha's teachings on this in https://becoming-buddha.com/yuganaddha-sutta-tranquility.../

Additionally, one must overcome the knowledge or cognitive obscurations that prevent omniscience or Buddhahood. The wisdom of twofold emptiness must be refined and deepened to the degree that all traces of reifying phenomena, not only in terms of 'subject', 'object' and 'action', but also in terms of arising, abiding and ceasing, in terms of cause and effect, characteristics of phenomena, internality and externality, existence and non-existence of phenomena, and so on. Knowledge obscuration is overcome by the wisdom of the emptiness of all phenomena.

The realization of twofold emptiness marks the entry into the path of seeing, the first bhumi stage of Bodhisattva path, but it is not the end -- Buddhahood, also known as the 11th, or 13th, or 16th bhumi depending on the map. It is said that Arahants and 8th Bhumi bodhisattvas have overcome all traces of emotional afflictions, while a Buddha has additionally overcome all traces of knowledge obscuration. The goal of AtR people here is generally Buddhahood (maybe some may opt for Arahantship depending on the tradition they practice - anyone is entitled to their own choice or preference for the spiritual path they undertake)" – Soh, Buddhahood: The End of All Emotional/Mental Afflictions and Knowledge Obscurations

"No appearances just mean the conceptual notions of mind, appearances and external objects are all deconstructed. It doesn't mean a blank nothing. Vivid Appearances will unfailingly manifest, that is what Mipham meant by coalescence of appearance and emptiness.

From the perspective of mind (alaya), negation is non-affirming and thorough.
From the non-conceptual gnosis standpoint, nothing is obstructed nor denied.
What appears is unconditioned, spontaneous, natural and beyond elaborations.

From ATR perspective that is -A (I am referring to complete deconstruction into Primordial Purity as emptiness [-A]). But it is also +A.

For both shares similar taste if no-self nature is the focus instead of conceptualities.

Therefore study both masters Mipham and Tsongkhapa with respect and reverence and don't talk nonsense.

If there is alternation between +A and -A, that is arya along the path. If there is no alternation, that is buddhahood. That is just my opinion." - John Tan, 2021

"In every Buddhist school, it is necessary to overcome the afflictive obstructions in order to be liberated from cyclic existence. For the Consequentialists, a consciousness conceiving inherent existence is the chief affliction; thus, no matter what phenomenon is held to exist inherently - a person or a cup - any consciousness conceiving inherent existence is an affliction and must be removed in order to gain freedom from cyclic existence.

In the Middle Way Autonomy School, however, a consciousness conceiving true existence is an obstruction to omniscience; as such, it has to be removed in order to attain Buddhahood, but not for liberation from cyclic existence. According to Autonomists, the chief among the obstructions to liberation is a consciousness conceiving the person to be a self-sufficient, substantially existent entity. Therefore, they hold that liberation is a consciousness conceiving the person to be a self-sufficient, substantially existent entity. Therefore, they hold that liberation from cyclic existence is achieved through cognizing and becoming accustomed to the person's not being an entity able to stand by itself. Consequentialists disagree, saying that in order to be liberated from cyclic existence it is necessary to cognize both persons and other phenomena as being without inherent or true existence. For them, conceptions of both persons and other phenomena as existing inherently are instances of afflictions binding one in cyclic existence.

Jang-gya presents positions of the Mind Only School and the Autonomy School that are contrary to the Consequence School... (continued in link)" - Emptiness Yoga https://books.google.com/books?id=eF54DtU6-V0C&pg=PA70...

“As I said, John Tan holds Prasangika view to be definitive, however his opinion about arahants is more like the Autonomist school's opinion.

In my opinion too, after having seen many Theravadins realising anatta but not emptiness, I think it is possible to become an arya and arahant in its path but without going to the extent of twofold emptiness realization.

Also, some of the Mahayana sutras like the Lankavatara Sutra that I quoted above lends credence to the Autonomist view on this regard.” – Soh, 2020

Mathias Pertusa

Is attaining the path of seeing [Soh: first bhumi stage of bodhisattva] = the realisation of anatta?

Soh Wei Yu

Malcolm related discovering the reality of mind with the first bhumi.
According to Kyle Dixon, "The reality of mind for him is non-arising which would be anatta
The difference between gsal ba and zang thal is difference between clarity experienced as background subject and clarity totally freed from that through realizing anatta"
He also wrote,
"Cognitive clarity is your cognizance reified as a subject, a self, while zangthal is that same aspect totally freed of all extremes and conditions."

1

Soh Wei Yu

Kyle Dixon also wrote before, "The Daśabhūmika sūtra, and its commentary by Vasubandhu. Candrakīrti's Madhyamakāvatāra. The Avataṃsaka.
But I'm not sure how extensive the descriptions are. The first bhūmi is without a doubt the first instance of insight into emptiness.
Wikipedia says "According to Tsong Khapa, first level bodhisattvas directly understand that persons do not exist by way of their own nature. Due to this, they overcome the false idea that the five aggregates constitute a truly existent person. They also eliminate predispositions toward corrupted ethics so completely that they will not arise again.[8]"
There's no doubt this is anatta"

1

Soh Wei Yu

After Kyle clarified Zang Thal, John Tan also wrote,
"[11:10 PM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Make sense
[11:10 PM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: Means bhumi 1 to 16 are the levels of maturing and living in the wisdom of this insight.
[11:11 PM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[11:11 PM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: But I never really study or read into bhumis as i am not exactly interested.
[11:11 PM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: 🤣
[11:12 PM, 8/18/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Lol ic..

[11:14 PM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: I am more into this stability and natural spontaneity of presence free from the proliferation of subject and object duality into the 3 states.
[11:14 PM, 8/18/2020] John Tan: I do not want to deviate myself from this goal."

1
Alessandro Socio Migliori

Soh Wei Yu
what 3 states?

Reply

- · 1d

- Soh Wei Yu
Waking, dreaming, deep sleep

- Soh Wei Yu
On first bhumi/path of seeing:
"...The corpus of the doctrines of Maitreya and the scriptures of the great chariot, Asaṅga, both teach with a single intent that a person on the ground of motivated conduct184 first understands all phenomena to be merely mind, and then experiences that the mind has nothing to perceive. Then, at the time of the supreme quality on the path of joining,185 one realizes that since the perceived does not exist, neither does the perceiver. Right after this, the truth of suchness, which is free from dualistic fixation, is directly realized. This is said to be the attainment of the first ground.
Duckworth, Douglas. Jamgon Mipam: His Life and Teachings (p. 151). Shambhala. Kindle Edition."

“Seeker12 wrote: ↑Sat Mar 20, 2021 4:47 am
It's sometimes said that an arhat corresponds to an 8th Bhumi Bodhisattva, or that an arhat can enter the Mahayana and basically they start at the 8th Bhumi or will very quickly get there, or similar things.

Malcolm:

No, this is a mistaken view. If this were the case, the three incalculable eons necessary for buddhahood in sūtrayāna could bypassed by attaining arhatship.

But it does not work like that. First, the emptiness realized by arhats is only the emptiness of the person, not of phenomena, and not of the emptiness of the four extremes.

Gorampa Sonam Senge addresses all these issues in his Differentiation of Views. You can look there."

"Someone quoted:

Now the real problem starts, because our quotations from the Dashabhumika Sutra and the Biography of Lord Maitreya Sutra give rise to another question. From both quotations, we now know that shravakas and pratyekabuddhas do have a realisation of the selflessness of phenomena, and not just the selflessness of the person. If this were not so, a bodhisattva on the first bhumi could easily outshine them even with his intelligence. However, because shravakas and pratyekabuddhas have an understanding of the emptiness of phenomena, the bodhisattva does not outshine them until the 7th bhumi.
-Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara With commentary by Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche

Arcaya Malcolm: No, since the śrāvakas maintain these dharmas — aggregates, āyatanas, and dhātus — are substantially real. Vasubandhu uses the example whereby a pot is a relative truth, its shards, are ultimate.

But until we come to Madhyamaka, there is no school that can escape the charge of being substantialist, including Yogacara (a form of nondual substantialism).

Also, Candrakīrti's comments about the realization of the emptiness of phenomena with respect to arhats is only considered from the point of view of recognizing the absence of inherent existence. But the emptiness of inherent existence is not the profound Mahāyāna emptiness free from four extremes.

...

Since skandhas, āyatanas, and dhātus are regarded as ultimate and real, even by arhats, they do not perceive the emptiness of phenomena."

"You have not shown this to be so. In other words, there is a disconnect between your assertion that arhats are free from clinging to their aggregates and your assertion that they realize emptiness free from the four extremes.

The emptiness the arhats realize is the implicative emptiness described in the Cullasunatta sūtra; not the nonimplicative emptiness of the Perfection of Wisdom.

But you feel free to believe whatever warms your heart." "Arhats have the view that aggregates exist. But they do not cling to them. That is your disconnect." - https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=39&t=24980&start=60

On the other hand, Malcolm also said in https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?t=34132&start=20

"Malcolm: The same three fetters are abandoned on the first bhumi, hence first stage bodhisattvas are Mahayana stream entrants.

Someone asked: The topic has another question hidden in it: How does the śrāvaka stream-entrant differ in his realization from the bodhisattva stream-entrant other than the former theoretically missing the foundations of bodhicitta?

Malcolm: The answer, according to Candrakīrti, is that their realization of emptiness is the same, in so far as they both realize the absence of inherent existence."

"Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
I also recall Lankavatara Sutra said something like only at the 7th bhumi does one empty all phenomena of characteristics, but I need to check.

· Reply
· 17m

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
From Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with Commentary by Ju Mipham:
The Bodhisattvas on this ground have a direct realization of the nonexistence of the self. This enables them to abandon the three fetters: the view of the transitory composite, the belief in the superiority of their ethical discipline, and doubt—together with all the obscurations eliminated on the path of seeing... ...Birth in the lower realms is no longer possible It is said that when Bodhisattvas reach the first ground, all paths whereby they might fall into the lower realms are closed.

· Reply
· 14m

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon

Author
I remember Kyle Dixon
was asked how he related anatta to first bhumi, he explained that anatta is also a kind of emptiness realization. Tagging here so he can correct me if I remembered incorrectly.
John Tan also said,
[2/6/20, 8:42:52 PM] John Tan: When you see through constructs, that is empty.
[2/6/20, 8:42:54 PM] Soh Wei Yu: After anatta its more like luminous objects only.. before emptiness. Consciousness to me is just the event.. the happening and event is luminous and private
[2/6/20, 8:43:05 PM] John Tan: Anatta is a form of emptiness insight also.
[2/6/20, 8:43:12 PM] John Tan: Redness of flower also
[2/6/20, 8:43:24 PM] John Tan: The total exertion also
[2/6/20, 8:44:28 PM] John Tan: But there is a deeper level...a level that uproot and dissolve any form of affirmation because affirmation blinds.
[2/6/20, 8:45:53 PM] John Tan: So that "deep seeing" that triggers the release via seeing DO is most important.
[2/6/20, 8:47:07 PM] John Tan: Read that two fold Emptiness
[2/6/20, 8:49:11 PM] Soh Wei Yu: Read what?
[2/6/20, 8:49:25 PM] John Tan: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2013/04/daniel-post-on-anattaemptiness.html
[2/6/20, 8:53:20 PM] John Tan: Even more difficult to uproot is the subtlety of conceptual frabrications.

[25/7/20, 8:26:06 AM] John Tan: It is how the mind is freed from all proliferated views or religions or any form of conditioning first.
[25/7/20, 8:27:57 AM] John Tan: The freeing is most crucial but not discarding the validity of how they provide explanations for the functioning of the world.
[25/7/20, 8:28:37 AM] John Tan: So first in anatta, the deconstruction of the background self. That perhaps is the most important deconstruction.
[25/7/20, 8:31:09 AM] John Tan: Then we look at object, how do we even come to the idea that phenomena possess characteristics at all? Why redness seem to stick to a red flower?
[25/7/20, 8:36:33 AM] John Tan: Then we look deeper into duality and look at how the dualistic structure is constructed...we see objectivity and subjectivity, do we clearly see and understand that the very feeling of objectivity can only arise because of an innate feeling of subjectivity? Can we feel this understanding in our bone and marrow or just a knowledge? The idea of self and other...this deep conditioning is often over look.
[25/7/20, 8:37:14 AM] John Tan: Like no suffering, no no suffering...
[25/7/20, 8:39:24 AM] John Tan: Then when we picks up all these conventions, views, we have no issues with them for they provide a way of explaining and accounting how the world and universe functions. How well they explain the world.
[25/7/20, 8:40:46 AM] John Tan: You can see how the world is totally make up of energetic vibration also and practice accordingly as long the path can guide you and it works and functions, but ultimately empty.

[27/8/20, 9:40:07 PM] John Tan: But the same insight of anatta must be applied to object, characteristics, cause and effect, production and cessation...which is a more slippery issue. Nevertheless, experientially seeing through self/Self is still most crucial.
Daniel's Post on Anatta/Emptiness

· Reply
· Remove Preview
· 6m

Soh Wei Yu
badge icon
Author
Lankavatara Sutra on eliminating characteristics of phenomena at the seventh bhumi:

https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?t=18934

Malcolm:

I checked the sutra in question in the Tibetan translation. It is not exactly the six and fifth bodhisattva bhumi. Here is another passage which clarifies things:

It is talking about equivalent stages of the eradication of afflictions in this case.

Other than the view of the abhisamaya of the śravakas abandoning fully the afflictions on the sixth or fifth stage, the latent afflictions are not abandoned and they have inconceivable deaths and transmigrations. They proclaim My births are finished, I abide in brahmacarya, my work is finished", uttering the lion's roar. Having said that, after they become throughly familiar with the absence of self in persons, their minds turn a period of nirvana.

What is here being stated is that that śravakas abandonment of active afflictions is equivalent to that of the fifth or sixth bhumi, but that they do not abandon latent afflictions and are thus subject to inconceivable deaths and transmigrations.

Another section, dealing with bhumis, states:

Beginning with the sixth stage, bodhisattva mahasattvas, śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas enter into the concentration on cessation. On the seventh stage, mental moment by mental moment, the bodhisattva mahāsattvas enter into a concentration that eliminates the characteristics of all things, but the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas do not. The śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas' concentration on cessation falls into the characteristics of an apprehended object and apprehending subject through possession of ideation. That being the case, if the characteristic of the absence of the different dharma's they obtain and the characteristic of diversity were to become non-existent, it would not be proper — on the seventh bhumi one is to concentrate on one mental moment after another. They enter into concentration without comprehending the intrinsic characteristic of the virtue and nonvirtue of all phenomena. That being the case, such a one who enters into concentration

is not skilled in entering into concentration on one mind moment after another.

The point is the comparison with the concentrations, abandonments and so on of śravakas and pratyekabuddhas with bodhisattvas on the stages. It is not an assertion that śravakas and pratyekabuddhas are traversing the stages.
· Reply
· 1m"

More related posts and not so related posts:
"[5:05 PM, 5/24/2020] John Tan: But I think need to be very careful not to assume that non-dual of subject/object naturally implies freedom from intellectual obscurations of internal/external, mind/matter.
[5:30 PM, 5/24/2020] John Tan: Yes no self and seeing through background, may not necessarily lead to dissolving of physicality obscuration, even then there are different level of clearing.
[5:30 PM, 5/24/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic..
[5:31 PM, 5/24/2020] John Tan: But no self will almost definitely result in pce. There is no duality between self and aggregates, but aggregates and external world may still remain...
[5:32 PM, 5/24/2020] John Tan: The relationships between aggregates and external world are like another level of self.
[5:33 PM, 5/24/2020] John Tan: The intellectual obscuration of duality of internal/external, mind/matter will not be resolved that easily."

[8:50 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Lanka says sravakas have apprending subject and apprehended objects
[8:50 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Means that is overcome only at the seventh bhumi
[8:50 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: No wonder kagyus say arahats are equal to sixth bhumi (as stated in lanka)
[8:51 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: And many masters other than dakpo tashi alone, states that the yoga of one taste begins at seventh bhumi
[8:51 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Means below that level their understanding of emptiness and anatta does not overcome subject and object or lead to a nondual taste
[8:52 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: This is something i dont understand as i have never been through any phase of anatta where subject and object is not overcome... anatta has been nondual for me from the start
[8:53 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Also there are many like daniel ingram, ajahn amaro and some others that describe nondual within the theravada system... so i dunno haha
(Soh:
Other Theravadins that realise nondual anatta includes:
Ajahn Nyanamoli Thero
Phra Kovit Khemananda
A Theravadin monk in AtR group, although admittedly through influence of AtR
And some others)
[8:57 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: Also this explains why for example, cognitive obscurations are defined as subject-action-object structure.. so they are saying mahayana leads to nondual gnosis besides eliminating afflictions
[9:12 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: my guess is that, i think arahat should have nondual taste like bahiya sutta [and kalaka sutta, etc], but maybe not necessarily realize the emptiness of the subject-action-object structure, or realize emptiness of characteristics... but by right shouldnt have apprehending subject and apprehended object

[9:13 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: but even padmasambhava seems to say sravakas are dual lol
[9:23 PM, 1/10/2021] John Tan: Stereotyping.
[9:23 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: ic.. yeah i guess so
[9:25 PM, 1/10/2021] John Tan: Cognitive obscurations is more than subject-action-object imo.
[9:39 PM, 1/10/2021] John Tan: I have no idea why you are so interested in stages. I have zero interest at all. Even phases of insights you also make it as stages of enlightenment... Headache..
[9:39 PM, 1/10/2021] Soh Wei Yu: lol

Related article: A Common Wrong Explanation of Hinayana vs Mahayana
.....
[2:20 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: There is even a dharmawheel thread where someone asked did dogen realise twofold emptiness or only anatta 🤣
[2:21 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: https://dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?t=17176
[5:07 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Nonsense lah.
[5:08 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: In the quote already clearly state that it is "myraid things"

[5:07 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. yeah i think dogen also said about illusory [and empty nature of phenomena] somewhere
[5:12 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Post anatta and deconstructions, there are varying degree of clearing ones obscurations. The path of seeing starts from 1st bhumi, not 12.
[5:17 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: A person constantly in total exertion shouldn't have a sense of self, other, phenomena and mind...a single moment of manifestation includes all and deconstructs all.
[5:17 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Does Dogen see redness of flower that redness belong to the flower?
[5:18 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Or when hearing, does the ear hears?
[5:18 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: How is it possible that one in total exertion has such view?
[5:19 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: When you see a rainbow, does the rainbow exist out there or in here? Does the rainbow truly exist at all?
[5:20 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Dogen doesnt [see inherent characteristics of phenomena].. he said
Not all beings see mountains and waters in the same way.
Some see water as jewels,
But do not see jewels as water.
We see their jewels as water.
Some see water as wondrous blossoms,
But do not use blossoms as water.
Hungry ghosts see water as raging fire, as pus and blood.
Dragons and fish see water as a palace or a pavilion.
Some see water as the seven treasures or a wish-granting jewel.
Some see water as a forest or a wall.
Some see it as the dharma nature of pure liberation,

The true human body,
The form of the body and the essence of mind.
Human beings see water as water.
Water, depending on the view, is dead or alive.
There is water for various beings,
Yet there is no original water.
There is no water for various beings.
Water for various beings
Does not depend on mind or body,
Does not arise from actions,
Does not depend on self or other.
Water's freedom depends only on water.
Water is not just earth, water, fire, wind, space, or mind.
Water is not blue, yellow, red, white, or black.
Water is not form, sound, smell, taste, touch, or mind.
But water as earth, water, fire, wind, and space
Is water actualized.
Wherever the Buddha Ancestors are, water is always there.
Wherever water is, the Buddha Ancestors always appear.
Mountains have been the abode of great sages
From the limitless past to the limitless present.
Mountains are the sages' inner chamber, their body and mind.
Mountains are actualized because of the sages.
Although mountains belong to the country,
Mountains belong to the people who love them.
When mountains love their owner, such a sage enters the mountains.
Since mountains belong to the sages who live there,
Trees and rocks abound and flourish
And birds and animals are inspired.
This is because the sages extend their virtue.
[5:21 PM, 7/26/2020] Soh Wei Yu: https://www.dharmasangha.org/sutra-of-mountains-and-waters/
[5:22 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: How deep is one realization on the view on top of one's experience is another matter.
[5:23 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Malcolm follows longchenpa and distinguished appearances from appearing objects right? Longchenpa and both tsongkhapa do not reject external phenomena. So what do they mean?
[5:25 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Tsongkhapa says phenomena themselves have two nature, conventional and ultimate, so who is right and who is wrong?
[5:28 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: All are just along the path and far far away from the end, so don't pretend as if by reading something, one is near buddhahood and comment as if one is Manjushri. 🤣

[5:33 PM, 7/26/2020] John Tan: Otherwise you become like mr J, read something about quantum mechanics and take it as if he becomes a quantum scientist sprouting nonsense throughout.🤣🤣🤣"

It should also be noted that the Mahayana view is not accepted by the Theravadins, who hold the Pali canon to be the definitive and actual words of Buddha, and do not accept the Mahayana teachings as the true spoken word of Buddha but a form of later development, an issue that is discussed in the blog here - What is an Authentic Buddhist Teaching?

"Regarding arahant, John Tan thinks perfection of wisdom is not necessary, but dispassion and experience of cessation [of passion, aggression and delusion] are crucial:

John TanSaturday, November 1, 2014 at 6:58pm UTC+08
Perfection of wisdom is not necessary IMO.
John TanSaturday, November 1, 2014 at 6:59pm UTC+08
Dispassion and experience of cessation are crucial factors.
John TanSaturday, November 1, 2014 at 7:00pm UTC+08
That is why I thought of reading autonomy school of thoughts

...

John TanThursday, October 23, 2014 at 11:02pm UTC+08
Cessation imo is not just the ability to shut down consciousness ... It is consciousness coming to a complete rest due to dispassion...genuine calming down of the mind 贪嗔痴(passion, aggression, delusion)...the fruition of a mind in total peace...

...
John TanTuesday, August 26, 2014 at 12:29am UTC+08
In later phase, you will prefer dispassion, letting go than concentration
John TanTuesday, August 26, 2014 at 12:30am UTC+08
You will find you know very little of how to let go despite strong attainment in concentration. Then you will revisit whatever you learnt and realized.

...

John TanSunday, July 13, 2014 at 9:59pm UTC+08
Dispassion will grow with time if you practice. When you experience the truth of 成住坏空(formation, existence, destruction and emptiness) in life, together with your practice...dispassion will eventually arise.

...

"John TanFriday, January 23, 2015 at 6:04pm UTC+08
Cyclical existence ends when selflessness of person is actualized because that is the cause of cyclical existence. However in mahayana and vajrayana if i am not wrong, anatta ends cyclical existence and led to liberation whereas further realization and actualization of selflessness in phenomena resulted in omniscience Buddhahood."

...

John TanWednesday, January 28, 2015 at 12:08pm UTC+08
I don't think the Theravada teaching is about that [annihilation]. In the lower tenet of the great exposition and sutra systems, they are very careful not to fall into the extremes of annihilation. When you get up the ladder be it yogacara, middle way up to Dzogchen and mahamudra, it is imo just a matter of refining the view of selflessness with direct experiential insights but still a sort of "middle path" from top to bottom...nvr a skewed towards the extreme of annihilation.

John TanWednesday, January 28, 2015 at 12:25pm UTC+08
Cessation is imp and once cessation is actualized, attachment to experiences of whatever samadhi is "cool down", so any form of promotion towards annihilation is unnecessary and extra (imo). Even shutting down of senses into an oblivious state is not exactly an extraordinary state, we enter in deep sleep every night anyway. The seeing through of any form of experience as dis-satisfactory that led to the direct taste of dispassion, dis-identification and atammayata should be the focus. Peace and liberation is directly related to this taste, so is the non-arisen of dharma. This is a state of evenness, calm and peace...and consciousness as well as senses can come to a shut down. Shutting down is not a secret or some exalted state for one that has gone through deep letting go in meditation but the cause that let one into it is. Anyway that is just my opinion.

...

John TanMonday, January 26, 2015 at 8:36am UTC+08
You must also understand a state of oblivion like deep sleep too is a landing ground, an escape into the cessation of experience. A movement from experience into non-experience and therefore it is driven by the same cause. It is not extinguishing the cause. The cessation is not to be understood as a shut down of senses and consciousness but disenchantment and dispassion that led to the ending of grasping. The mind no more chases anything and everything settles down, gone cool and is seen to be in a state of rest and peace.
John TanMonday, January 26, 2015 at 8:40am UTC+08
But it can and will lead to the shut down of senses and consciousness like deep sleep which is a natural consequent. So do not chase of the state of oblivion but the gradual extinguishing of grasping and into 寂静(quiescence).
John TanMonday, January 26, 2015 at 8:45am UTC+08

This is no different from deep sleep...what is important is the cause that led a practitioner into that state...in any case if seen from the perspective of the cause, the shutting down of senses and consciousness become quite irrelevant and should not be presented that way.

...

John TanSunday, January 25, 2015 at 8:47am UTC+08
This is what must be tasted as an experience ... The experience of cessation...everything coming to a complete rest...relax and rest...relax and let go of whatever completely into cessation. Even to the extent of cessation of consciousness...be more nihilistic than nihilist... are you able to do that?
John TanSunday, January 25, 2015 at 8:53am UTC+08
Not as what Kenneth said as a "realization" but as a taste until the ending of that taste...everything comes to an end...it is like what you wrote the other time...Arahat happily waiting for death...terminating all passions...extinction...all your so called grand beauty of lsd experiences into extinction... are you able to do that?

[Soh: This is referring to this text:

Ven. Sañkicca:
I don't delight in death,
don't delight in living.
I await my time
as a worker his wage.
I don't delight in death,
don't delight in living.
I await my time
mindful, alert. — Thag 11]

Soh Wei YuSunday, January 25, 2015 at 9:22am UTC+08
Don't think so yet..
John TanSunday, January 25, 2015 at 9:51am UTC+08
Should paste it in blog...it is a good realization of 寂...寂靜(quiescence) is often overlooked and presence is often over-emphasized. As such even non-arising nature is understood analytically, it is not appropriately tasted. There are blissful experience but there is no peace and there is no liberation without 寂. As for 万法无生，本自寂静(all dharmas are non-arising, fundamentally quiescent) is a realization. To actualize it, we must be able to have some taste of 寂靜 (quiescence) first then we can recognize it when insight dawn.

...

John TanSunday, November 16, 2014 at 9:10am UTC+08

Bliss of presence and bliss of cessation... both are related to the emptying of self/Self. After anatta the sense of self/Self is realized to be fabrication and the entire chain of afflictive D.O. [dependent origination] can come to a rest by seeing how stressful, dis-satisfying and suffering the chain is. That is right intention in the Noble Eightfold Path. Taste this afflictive D.O. coming to rest in relation to the need to maintain the Self/self or beingness. When the mind let go this way seeing the dis-satisfactoriness... it is by way of renunciation, dispassion, dis-identification... the freedom and bliss that come from Atammayata is the bliss of cessation (寂灭为乐), it is understood to be many times more blissful than any form of pleasure and beingness. However cutting the cause of suffering at root in Mahayana is about seeing the emptiness of self and phenomena. The bliss of cessation of the Theravadins are replaced by tasting the non-arising of phenomena therefore 观法如化，三昧常寂, 见闻觉知，本自圆寂。 (contemplating all dharmas as illusory, [always in] samadhi-quiescence, seen-heard-cognized-sensed, are by nature completely quiescent [nirvana])" - Soh, 2020

Since I (Soh) have not experienced the slightest trace of subject/object duality and agency for the past 9+ years [at the time of writing in 2020] after the realization of anatta, and John Tan has likewise explicitly told me that he has not experienced the slightest trace of subject/object duality and agency for 20+ years (he realised anatta in 1997 and overcame the trace of background in a year or so), we will certainly qualify under Daniel Ingram's definition of 'arahant'. However, whether Daniel's definition of arahantship corresponds to the scriptural/sutta's fetter model of arahant is not so clear.

Now, if anatta realization is able to remove all subject/object agent/action, what remains after that realization? Why can't it be called arahantship?

In fact for many people, after the anatta realization including myself, we generally see mental afflictions being severed.

As Kyle Dixon also said and likewise for his teacher Malcolm,

Kyle dixon: "...The anatta definitely severed many emotional afflictions, for the most part I don't have negative emotions anymore. And either the anatta or the strict shamatha training has resulted in stable shamatha where thoughts have little effect and are diminished by the force of clarity. I'm also able to control them, stopping them for any amount of desired time etc. But I understand that isn't what is important. Can I fully open to whatever arises I would say yes. I understand that every instance of experience is fully appearing to itself as the radiance of clarity, yet timelessly disjointed and unsubstantiated.." - Kyle Dixon, 2013

Some people have all traces of afflictions completely removed upon realization such as bahiya, meaning they skipped the process of stream entry to anagami and simply realized arahantship at the first instance of realization. but 99% of practitioners aren't instantaneous like these
for example one of the local practitioners pam tan who realised anatta a few years ago reported even more surfacing of afflictions very much the same way that you warned me might happen after anatta insight, but the difference now is

that whereas it was deep depression and suffering before, now they just burn up in an intense way and self liberates but without causing real suffering and depression, so in a way it is very freeing - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/03/pam-tans-anatta-realisation-and-purging.html

Even after these conditionings are purged, we do not necessarily call it arahant. Arahant would be completely free of any traces of clinging and appropriation, not even the slightest trace of clinging that arise for even 1 second can happen to a true arahant. Someone who experiences clinging and affliction that self-liberate, even that cannot be considered arahant. An arahant simply do not have clinging or the slightest trace of afflictions at all, having cut them off from its roots as buddha put it, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, etc.

“Buddha: "Passion is a trouble; aversion is a trouble; delusion is a trouble. These have been abandoned by a monk whose effluents have ended — their root destroyed, made like a palmyra stump, deprived of the conditions of development, not destined for future arising. That's why the monk whose effluents have ended is said to be untroubled.

"Him coming stands for the arahant.""

Also, as John Tan wrote,
https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2014/05/early-buddhism-model-of-awakening.html

Excerpt:

So what is the difference between the 'view of self' and the 'trace of self'?

As Thusness wrote to me in 2011:

Session Start: 29 March 2011

Thusness: yeah of course
AEN: Ic
Thusness: if you do not feel the 'body construct' and 'mind construct', just the play of dharma, how does the sense of self arise?
AEN: It doesnt
Thusness: yeah...
Thusness: for me, it is just this dependent originated activity...
Thusness: primordially pure and luminous
Thusness: sense of self does not arise
Thusness: i do not see 'body' or 'mind'
Thusness: for there is no agent

Thusness: for you by now you should be clear on this
Thusness: experientially
Thusness: otherwise, you will not feel the 'process'
AEN: Ic..
Thusness: you told me about the mini maha experience
Thusness: so you should not feel the sense of self
AEN: Yea
Thusness: logically when the agent is gone, the primary cause for these sense of self should also be gone
Thusness: however due to the deeper dispositions, it continues to linger
Thusness: when you engage in this modern world, it re-enfore the identity
Thusness: so by seeing there is no-self in anatta, the sense of self should also dwindle
AEN: Ic
Thusness: when you practice and there is mind body drop
Thusness: due to de-construction of body and mind
Thusness: there is only purity of sensations
Thusness: it is just a lingering trace
Thusness: how does the sense of self arise?
Thusness: and that means it is simply a dispositions
Thusness: and during daily activity, there is re-enforcing of this trace
Thusness: when there is no agent, this trace will be seen as it is
Thusness: in non-dual and one mind, this is not just a trace
Thusness: you may have trace of identity
Thusness: but 'Self' (comments: self-view; that a truly existing self/Self exists) is not a trace
Thusness: it is as if it is truly 'there' and all there is
Thusness: but anatta is different
Thusness: for everything is like a trace
Thusness: and self is not any more special that an arising sound
Thusness: no diff
Thusness: can you understand the difference?

Early Buddhism's Model of Awakening
awakeningtoreality.com
"There is the self that arises from conceptual reification, seeing through that with anatta insight is entry point.

There is the self that arises in marketplace, in day to day activities, anatta of that is graduation." - John Tan, 2018

“the degree of openess and effortlessness are a matter of wisdom in seeing through... and this seeing through is only actualized in moment to moment engagement.

We do not know how much residue is left until we meet conditions" - John Tan
"Andre posted another good article today about how the 8 worldly concerns in daily engagements relate to agentless-action, dependent origination and emptiness and all these play their inevitable bits in wearing off our obscurations. As the sutra explained, habitual obscurations are exceedingly subtle like scent left behind a container hence there is no short-cut to liberation -- it's all step by step and bit by bit erosion of the nuances and subtleness of "inherentness" in one's ignorance." – John Tan, Connecting dots, authenticating DO

An arahant in the suttas cannot be a lay person that owns money (Buddha said arahants cannot store up possessions, and all recorded arahants in scriptures that awakened as a lay person became a monk/nun on that very day by choice or died on that very day by accident, in contrast to the thousands of monks, nuns and laypersons that were at the stages of stream entry, once-returner and non-returner), and various other implications. Daniel may think these are myths but since it is what the Buddha said in the nine things an Arahant cannot do*, I personally do not describe myself as an 'Arahant' or a 'Buddha'.

***The Nine things an Arahant cannot do**: 1. Store up possessions, 2. Intentionally kill any form of life, 3. Steal, 4. Perform sexual intercourse, 5. Tell a deliberate lie, 6. Act improperly out of desire, 7. Act improperly out of ill-will, 8. Act improperly out of delusion, 9. Act improperly out of fear (from Anguttara Nikaya 9.7)*

The Buddha also said that the fetter of householdership must be abandoned for complete liberation:

"When this was said, the wanderer Vacchagotta asked the Blessed One: "Master Gotama, is there any householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has made an end of suffering?" "Vaccha, there is no householder who, without abandoning the fetter of householdership, on the dissolution of the body has made an end of suffering."" - MN 71

Mahanama, there is still a state un-abandoned by you internally, owing to which at times states of greed, hate and delusion invade your mind and remain; for were that state already abandoned by you internally you would not be living the home life, you would not be enjoying sensual pleasures. It is because that state is un-abandoned by you internally that you are living the home life and enjoying sensual pleasures.

- *MN 14*

There are these ten fetters. Which ten? Five lower fetters & five higher fetters. And which are the five lower fetters? Self-identification views, uncertainty, grasping at habits & practices, sensual desire, & ill will. These are the five lower fetters. And which are the five higher fetters? Passion for form, passion for what is formless, conceit, restlessness, & ignorance. These are the five higher fetters. And these are the ten fetters.

- *AN 10:13*

(Notes: Terminating the fetter of self-identification views, uncertainty, grasping at habits & practices = stream

enterer [sotapanna], attenuating sensual desire, & ill will = once returner [sakadagami], terminating sensual desire, & ill will = non returner [anagami], terminating all ten fetters including the remaining five higher fetters passion for form, passion for what is formless, conceit, restlessness, & ignorance, = sainthood/conqueror [arahant])

MN73 describes more than five hundred laymen and more than five hundred laywomen stream enterers that enjoys sensual pleasure, more than five hundred laymen and more than five hundred laywomen non returners although with no mention of partaking in sensual pleasures (implying they do not), more than five hundred monks and more than five hundred nuns that are arahants with no mention of lay ones. Notice that in that sutta, 1) only monks and nuns are arahants, 2) only monks and nuns, and Celibate laymen and women are anagamis (because they are incapable of enjoying sensual pleasures or engage in them), 3) there are monks and nuns plus laymen and laywomen enjoying sensual pleasures of the stream entry and sakadagami category. Each category of awakening is by the thousands. Thousands of Buddha's students attained awakening. The numbers that realise after encountering AtR is nothing compared to the number of Buddha's students attaining awakening in his lifetime (also, the Mahamudra teachings has a similar situation back in the olden days, "Half the people are Drukpas, half the Drukpas are mendicant beggars, and half the mendicants are siddhas." – Khamtrul Rinpoche), just to make it clear that awakening happening often is not something particularly special but should be the norm for any effective system or teaching of awakening.
I know we live in modern times and when comparing to ancient times you may have doubts, because why aren't these huge numbers present now? Could those numbers be completely made up and imagined by some writers? In my opinion, as Angelo Dillulo (Angelo Gerangelo) said, he thinks we are reaching a point where spiritual awakening is about to go mainstream. We soon will get to those numbers, no doubt. Just because where was a gap where these numbers occur doesn't mean it hasn't happened before. It's like the moon landing – how come there wasn't a human moon landing from the 1970s to present day? The technology back then was so much worse comparably, and yet nobody is landing on the moon nowadays, and efforts to restart the moon mission is taking up so much time and effort? Some people prone to believing in conspiracy theories will start to talk about the moon landing hoax, they think it's all made up due to the America vs Soviet rivalry back in the 1960s, that we never really made it to the moon at all. It's all just Hollywood movie effects in a studio, they say, citing apparent anomalies in the directions of shadows on photographs and so on. But based on what I researched, I don't think that's the case. Anyway, conspiracies on such a large scale is just very, incredibly difficult to sustain without some kind of evidence leak. I don't think it's a conspiracy. It just so happens that the whole "going to moon movement" died out, served its purpose, and people lost interest along the way. Same goes for the spiritual awakening movement. The whole movement of spiritual awakening back in Buddha's time died out. There was a whole fad on spiritual awakening for a while, but eventually new things that excite the population came up. Eventually people became engrossed in the industrial and scientific revolution and economic growth and materialism in recent centuries until recently, we realized the meaninglessness and spiritual void in the midst of it all, despite its obvious benefits to our quality of life. Then we're back on the spiritual quest again as a civilization. And, right about time too, because that might be the only one thing that can save us from worldwide climate apocalypse due to selfishness, greed and ignorance. That's my theory, anyway.

Spiritual awakening is like studying and graduating from university. Is graduating from university easy? Not necessarily, you need to put time and effort to it. Is graduating from university close to impossible? Far from it, people graduate from university all the time by the bucketload. Likewise if you truly set your will and intention for liberation and work on it with diligence (or the three greats of Zen - great doubt, great faith, great determination), there is no reason you cannot break through. The myth that enlightenment is reserved for the rare elite is simply just that - a myth, and a myth increasingly proven false with increasing open access to information and the advent of the internet, where

more and more ordinary people like myself are revealing their own spiritual awakening. Books like “three pillars of zen” also showcase many examples of ordinary folks attaining kensho or satori.

But even this is just an imperfect analogy, why? You need some degree of smartness to graduate from university, it is not all hard work. But liberation is possible even if you are uneducated, or are intellectually dull witted.

Padmasambhava taught in Self-Liberation through Seeing with Naked Awareness in English & Chinese (great text!):

“Just as is the case with the sesame seed being the cause of the oil and the milk being the cause of butter,
But where the oil is not obtained without pressing and the butter is not obtained without churning,
So all sentient beings, even though they possess the actual essence of Buddhahood,
Will not realize Buddhahood without engaging in practice.
If he practices, then even a cowherd can realize liberation.
Even though he does not know the explanation, he can systematically establish himself in the experience of it.
(For example) when one has had the experience of actually tasting sugar in one's own mouth,
one does not need to have that taste explained by someone else.
Not understanding this (intrinsic awareness), even Panditas can fall into error.
Even though they are exceedingly learned and knowledgeable in explaining the nine vehicles,
it will only be like spreading rumors of places, which they have not seen personally.
And with respect to Buddhahood, they will not even approach it for a moment.”

In the Pali canon too, there was a record of a dull witted man who nevertheless attained arahantship:

"When Mahāpanthaka discovered his brother’s stupidity, he asked him to leave the Order (see DhA.iv.190f), but Cūḷapanthaka so loved the Buddha’s teaching that he did not wish to return to the lay-life. One day Jīvaka Komārabhacca, wishing to give alms to the Buddha and the monks, asked Mahāpanthaka, who was acting as steward, to collect all the monks in the monastery. This he did, omitting only Cūḷapanthaka who, he said, had made no progress in the Doctrine. Greatly grieved, Cūḷapanthaka determined to leave the Order, but as he was going out the Buddha met him, took him into the Gandhakuṭi and comforted him, giving him a clean piece of cloth. “Sit with your face to the East,” said the Buddha, “repeat the words ‘Removing the dirt’ (rajoharanaṃ) and wipe your face with the cloth.” As Cūḷapanthaka carried out these instructions he noticed that the cloth became dirty, and as he concentrated his mind on the impermanence of all things, the Buddha sent a ray of light and exhorted him about the necessity of getting rid of the impurities of lust and other evils. At the end of the admonition Cūḷapanthaka attained Arahantship with the four paṭisambhidā, which included knowledge of all the Piṭakas." - http://www.aimwell.org/DPPN/culapanthaka_thera.html , also https://legacy.suttacentral.net/en/thag10.4

Likewise, age is not a hindrance to awakening. I awakened to anatta at the age of 20. But that is no where close to record breaking. In the suttas, **two arahants were 7 years old when they attained arahantship.** So never underestimate young practitioners, they can realise and attain the various stages of awakening as much as an old practitioner can attain them. The lack or presence of life experiences and growing wisdom, intellect and IQ, so on and so forth are not necessarily indicative of their spiritual wisdom. Those are different axis of development.

Now, back to discussing MN73: No anagamis or arahants are said to enjoy sensual pleasures, unlike stream enterer and once returners.

An anagami and arahant would have no desires or clinging to a relationship either. An anagami simply asked whether his wifes want to leave and he could arrange it, and didn't have issues either way. Didn't felt sad or perturbed that they are leaving either. I read that some anagamis remain as lay persons (in the suttas) as they need to take care of parents and so on.

As someone wrote, "As for lifestyle changes upon abandoning the five fetters, this is what the non-returner Ugga has to say: "I had four young wives. I then went to them and said: 'Sisters, I have undertaken the training rules with celibacy as the fifth. If you want, you can enjoy wealth right here and do merits, or go back to your own family circle, or inform me if you want me to give you over to another man.' My eldest wife then said to me: 'Young sir, give me to such and such a man.' I sent for that man, and with my left hand I took my wife, with my right hand I took the ceremonial vase, and I gave her to that man. But even while giving away my young wife, I don't recall that any alteration took place in my mind. This is the third astounding and amazing quality found in me."

By logical conjecture and inference informed by practice, I am inclined to think that it is possible that at a later phase of one's practice, the power of complete disenchantment and dispassion can lead a practitioner to actually renouncing the lay life. Without the slightest grasping or craving for sensual enjoyment, attachment to someone in a relationship, and fanciful possessions, wouldn't it make more sense to renounce and be a monk or nun than remain a layperson? It would therefore not be very accurate to portray to others that one has attained the Buddha's ideal of full awakening (even according to the standards of the early Buddhist traditions like Theravada, let alone the later Mahayana traditions which takes what they consider to be an even higher attainment - Buddhahood - as their final aim), while not fully meeting the ten fetter model or the nine things an arahant cannot do criterias that the Buddha taught.

I know of a western dharma teacher with quite a number of students. He is an ex-monk. He claims to have attained the traditional ten fetter model arahantship (this teacher is not Daniel M. Ingram of course, if you haven't been reading attentively), and he does seem to have realisation of anatta (although that does not mean I completely agree with the view he espoused, particularly with regards to his interpretation of dependent origination), and yet he remains a lay person (by storing up possessions, which a layperson must do to survive [unless the person is living in a foraging lifestyle, and I grant that as another possibility/exception, however other suttas also said that the fetter of householdership must be abandoned for liberation, so that pretty much seems to assert that renunciation of home life is a kind of surety for arahants], this contradicts the 9 things the arahant cannot do) and his interpretation is that one can still have sex (again, contradicts the 9 things the arahant cannot do) without sensual desires, which contradicts what the Buddha said - "Bhikkhus, that one can engage in sensual pleasures without sensual desires, without perceptions of sensual desire, without thoughts of sensual desire—that is impossible." (Alagaddūpama Sutta) So even in such cases, it does not really meet the traditional criterias and seems to be at odds with Buddha's view, and again does not go beyond sakadagami based on strict fetter model interpretations (even anagamis no longer engage in sensual pleasures according to the scriptures, in other words all traditional anagamis and arahants were celibates without exceptions). I have read his documents before, and the way he describe the cessation of the 8th fetter, it is no different to what I have already experienced in October 2010. Furthermore I am also generally free from negative emotions and

the five poisons. In other words, I would also qualify as an arahant under his definition. But I am still not convinced that his version of arahantship is similar to Buddha's version of arahantship.

Also, a certain Thai monk of the modern era self-proclaimed to be an arahant. He too claims to have eliminated all cravings and fetters, although his insight is of the level of one mind (still holding eternalist view despite the collapse of Witness into nondual awareness, and I am not the sole person making such a critique - Ven. Dhammanando made similar comments in the Dhammawheel forum), so I am not convinced that he fully meets the Buddha's criterias for arahantship, however this is another practitioner I have great respect for. It should be noted that despite my being unconvinced of his claim to arahantship, this does not mean that his claim to the elimination of fetters was completely bunk. Likewise, John Tan and I have great respect to certain non-Buddhist sages like Ramana Maharshi, as they too have certain meditative mastery. As the Buddha has pointed out, even the various adherents of other religions [which would certainly include those holding eternalist views/being at the stages of I AM and one mind, etc] can also achieve certain levels of purity, only with the exception of completely relinquishing all doctrines/views/sense of Self which is the hallmark of the Buddhadharma - *Cula-sihanada Sutta (MN 11) -- The Shorter Discourse on the Lion's Roar {M I 63} [Ñanamoli Thera and Bhikkhu Bodhi, trans.] - http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.011.ntbb.html, the Buddha declares that only through practicing in accord with the Dhamma can Awakening be realized. His teaching is distinguished from those of other religions and philosophies through its unique rejection of all doctrines of self. [BB]*

> "As I told you already, my Guru showed me my true nature -- and the true nature of the world. Having realized that I am one with, and yet beyond the world, I became free from all desire and fear. I did not reason out that I should be free -- I found myself free -- unexpectedly, without the least effort. This freedom from desire and fear remained with me since then.
>
> The main change was in the mind; it became motionless and silent, responding quickly, but not perpetuating the response. Spontaneity became a way of life, the real became natural and the natural became real."

- Advaitin sage Nisargadatta in his book ***I AM THAT***

Maharaj: "The common things of life: I experience them just as you do. The difference lies in what I do not experience. I do not experience fear or greed, hate or anger. I ask nothing, refuse nothing, keep nothing. In these matters I do not compromise. Maybe this is the outstanding difference between us. I will not compromise, I am true to myself, while you are afraid of reality."

...

Questioner: "When you say clear and empty, what do you mean?"

Maharaj: "I mean free of all contents. To myself I am neither perceivable or conceivable; there is nothing I can point out and say: 'this I am'. You identify yourself with everything so easily; I find it impossible. The feeling: 'I

am not this or that, nor is anything mine' is so strong in me that as soon as a thing or a thought appears, there comes at once the sense 'this I am not'."

— *I Am That,* Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj, 1973

Unlike Daniel, I hold that the overcoming of ten fetters of the Pali canon in a rather literal way is truly attainable, as well as open to the possibility that the overcoming of the emotional and cognitive obscurations of the Mahayana model, is also possible. You should know that the Pali canon and early scriptures recorded not just one or two arahants that attained that state in the Buddha's sangha. There were more than a thousand, or perhaps thousands of arahants in the Buddha's community that attained the state of arahantship (and also thousands who attained the state of sotapanna, sakadagami and anagami) while the Buddha was teaching. If so many people (presuming that the scriptures weren't completely making these figures up) attained the traditional 'arahantship', then surely, there must be truth to it? Or were the thousand(s) of arahants all completely mistaken about exactly what their own attainment entails? If the ten fetter model didn't apply to them completely, wouldn't at least some of the thousand(s) arahants have noticed it, spoken up at the great historical Buddhist councils and said "Hey arahant brothers & sisters, did you guys notice something's off with this ten fetter model? Oh yeah, we all did, too! Arahat 1 still had sexual fantasies! Arahat 2 still had cravings for jhanas! Arahat 3 was still restless! Something's definitely wrong here, arahat guys and gals. Maybe we should really just sit down and review it together, shall we, in this Great Buddhist Council #99" All I'm saying is, just perhaps, we should at least keep our minds open?

That is not to say that I do not think the Buddhist traditions do not clearly have the mythical element to it as do all religious traditions in the world (despite being much less prevalent than in the Abrahamic religions, and certainly not crucial to its core doctrines and transformative power since Buddhism is not so much about dogmas and far more about direct experience and wisdom), for example the Mahayana and Tibetan tradition and maps do have a strong element that is clearly mythical, as Daniel Ingram wrote in The Bodhisattva Bhumi Model - and even the earliest traditions, the Pali canon contains things that I find to be clearly mythical (for example, that humans once lived to eighty thousand years old, or the theory of devolution, etc, which contradicts what we know in the modern age to be factual, e.g. Darwinian evolution). One should of course try to separate the myths from reality, as John Tan also pointed out in What is an Authentic Buddhist Teaching?. In any case, realistically speaking, at least in this day and age, I do think John Tan's wisdom is pretty clear and complete on the insight front -- as John Tan told me in 2007, "to me and from my point of view, it [the John Tan stages] is fairly thorough and beyond that, I think only you can find in sutra or fairy tales. :P" That being said, John Tan has made many breakthroughs since he wrote the 7 stages in terms of clearing the two obscurations (afflictive and knowledge obscurations), so it should not be mistaken that the realization of 7 stages represents some kind of finality. The realization of emptiness may be definitive and sudden, but the elimination of two obscurations is gradual.

And as for the Mahayana model, the Lankavatara and other Mahayana Sutras state that the sixth/eighth bhumi bodhisattva is equivalent to the arahat in terms of eliminating all emotional obscurations/passions, while the remnant cognitive obscurations are eliminated at the end of the tenth bhumi, after which one attains Buddhahood. The bhumis

1 to 7 are 'impure bhumis' because those bodhisattvas have not overcome afflictions completely, but the bhumis from 8 onwards are 'pure bhumis'.

"There are basically five paths and ten stages. Paths measure realizations, stages measure qualities. There are also four kinds of realized persons, which are in fact measures of liberation from latent afflictions. The measure of full liberation is an arhat, pratyekabuddha, or an eighth stage bodhisattva, because only arhats, pratyekabuddhas and eighth stage bodhisattvas on up are free from birth in the three realms. However, the difference between the former two and the latter are the qualities cultivated on the path and the depth of realization. Arhats and pratyekabuddhas do not necessarily realize the emptiness of phenomena, and they do not necessarily comprehend the nonarising of phenomena." – Dzogchen Teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith

Here's a quote on Jamgon Mipam's explanations of the bhumis (one of John Tan's favourite Tibetan authors along with others like Tsongkhapa):

"PATHS TO ENLIGHTENMENT

What follows is a short explanation of the way Mipam presents the structure of the Buddhist path to awakening. According to him, we can only go so far in the Lesser Vehicle, realizing the lack of a personal self based on its path, but without the Great Vehicle, we will not come to fully realize the lack of self (that is, emptiness) with respect to all phenomena. In other words, those in the Lesser Vehicle realize only part of emptiness (the lack of a personal self) but do not realize the entire scope of emptiness. They hang on to an ultimate foundation of reality (the fundamental elements of reality, or dharmas), whereas there is actually no such foundation. Therefore, according to Mipam, one cannot become a buddha based solely on the Lesser Vehicle path; becoming a buddha is the result of the Great Vehicle. Nevertheless, realizing the lack of a personal self is enough to free us from samsara, because in doing so, we relinquish the obscurations of the afflictive emotions. The afflictive emotions can be included within the "three poisons" of attachment, aversion, and delusion.

These afflictive obscurations function to prevent liberation, and they are tied in with the apprehension of a personal self. Based on the notion of such a self, we become attached (to me and mine) and averse (to what is other). This notion of self keeps the wheel of samsara rolling, because it perpetuates the distorted framework through which we selfishly act out attachment and aversion, thus sowing the seeds of suffering. Afflictive obscurations have two aspects: a gross, imputed aspect and a more subtle, innate aspect. According to Mipam, the imputed aspects are relinquished on the first "ground" (Tib. sa, Skt. bhūmi) when you directly perceive the suchness of reality. This experiential realization is called "the path of seeing."

The imputed aspects of the afflictive obscurations are learned and not inborn like the innate aspects. Imputed aspects involve distortions that are explicitly conceptual, as opposed to the perceptual distortions that comprise the innate aspects. The difference between the imputed and innate aspects can be understood as something like the difference between software and hardware: the innate aspects are embedded more deeply in one's mind-stream and are thus more

difficult to eliminate. Imputed ego-clinging refers to imputing qualities to the self that are not there—namely, apprehending the self as a singular, permanent, and independent entity. This is overcome on the first bodhisattva ground in a direct, nonconceptual experience of reality that is the culminating insight of analysis. Nevertheless, the more subtle, innate aspect of ego-clinging hangs on.

The innate ego-clinging, as the bare sense of self that is imputed on the basis of the five aggregates, is more difficult to remove. Rather than construing qualities to the self such as singularity or permanence, it is a more subtle feeling of simply “I am” when, for instance, we wake up in the morning. This innate sense of self is a deeply rooted, instinctual habit. It thus involves more than just imputed identity; it is a deeper experiential orientation of distorted subjectivity. Although analysis into the nature of the self paves the way for it to be overcome, it cannot fall away by analysis alone. Rather, it has to be relinquished through cultivating the path of meditation. According to Mipam, there are no innate aspects of the afflictive obscurations left on the eighth ground. However, the afflictive emotions are only one of two types of obscurations, the other being cognitive obscurations.

Cognitive obscurations are nothing less than conceptuality: the threefold conceptualization of agent, object, and action. Conceptuality is tied in to apprehending a self of phenomena, which includes mistaking phenomena as real, objectifying phenomena, and simply perceiving dualistically. Such conceptualization serves to obstruct omniscience. Based on the Great Vehicle, these cognitive obscurations can be completely relinquished; thereby, the result of the Great Vehicle path culminates in not merely escaping samsara, as in the Lesser Vehicle, but in becoming an omniscient buddha. According to Mipam, up to the seventh ground, the realization (of the twofold selflessness) and abandonment (of the twofold obscurations) are the same in the Great and Lesser Vehicles.

As with the Great Vehicle, he maintains that accomplishing the path of the Lesser Vehicle entails the realization of the selflessness of phenomena, to see that phenomena are empty. Those who accomplish the Lesser Vehicle path also realize the selflessness of phenomena, because their realization of emptiness with respect to a person is one instance of realizing the emptiness of phenomena. The final realization of the Lesser Vehicle path, however, is incomplete. Mipam compares it to taking a small gulp of the water of the ocean: we can say that those who realize emptiness in the Lesser Vehicle have drunk the water of the ocean, just not all of it.150 The final realization of the bodhisattva’s path in the Great Vehicle, however, is the full realization of emptiness, like drinking the entire ocean.

- Jamgon Mipam: His Life and Teachings"

"There is the self that arises from conceptual reification, seeing through that with anatta insight is entry point.

There is the self that arises in marketplace, in day to day activities, anatta of that is graduation." - John Tan, 2018

Many non-traditionalists may think that a literal interpretation of Buddha’s fetter/emotional model is unrealistic, and I understand that it is reasonable according to that perspective to create a modernist revision of the original models.

However, regardless of whether their premise is true - and their premise is simply an opinion in the eyes of many - I think it will cause too much confusion/discrepancies to create a separate re-definition/model out of what was originally intended to be heavily based on eliminating the three poisons/ten fetters. As far as my practice go, I can say with certainty from my own experience that awakening and the deepening of awakening will lead to a spontaneously virtuous life (one's actions that arise out of a pure and luminous mind/universe devoid of any sense of, or clinging to, self/Self are automatically and naturally virtuous, rather than based on a forced or contrived set of virtues via following rules) and one does become incapable of intentionally causing harm to others, and one's emotional afflictions does get attenuated and then eliminated (see chapter: **Overcoming the Emotional Afflictions (aka. Kleshas, Samskaras, Vasanas**), however I cannot say that I fully meet all criterias for the traditional fetter model of 'arahantship' or 'buddhahood' at the point of writing.

There are also many people who think that enlightenment confers things like some kind of mastery of magical powers, which is magical thinking. This is scripturally untrue, especially since the early texts of Buddhism in the Pali canon such as Susima Sutta states that many arahants did not have any supernatural powers but relied on wisdom for liberation. It is true that the Buddha and many of his arahant disciples, including but not limited to Mogallana (foremost in psychic powers), claims mastery of siddhis. Furthermore, a number of awake people I personally know, including John Tan and Sim Pern Chong, have had certain experiences with them (of course, not the sort of mastery like Buddha or Mogallana) - John Tan prefers to call them "non-local experiences", although I suspect John Tan would not want me to write about his experiences so I shall avoid discussing in detail here - but in his view, the primary benefit of such experiences is that it provides an avenue for strengthening one's insight into emptiness through having certain experiences of the non-locality of dharma and dependent origination. Daniel M. Ingram had done more than one interviews sharing his personal experiences with siddhis - see On "Supernatural Powers" or Siddhis, and Past Lives, also John Tan told me this article by Daniel M. Ingram is what John meant by magic: http://integrateddaniel.info/magick-and-the-brahma-viharas/. However, it is simply not true that awakening automatically confers psychic abilities. Even in so called 'highest teachings' of Tibetan Buddhism like Mahamudra, it is taught that mastering the four yogas of Mahamudra confers full realization and liberation which is an equivalent of Buddhahood, yet not necessarily other qualities like the perfection of siddhis that the Buddha had, at least while still living, while suggesting that these powers may manifest fully only in the afterlife due to taking up a "quick path", in contrast to the "3 aeons minimum" slow path of common Mahayana which involves complete mastery of the ten paramitas (one of which is the mastery of spiritual powers) through gradual ardious practice. However, it is general knowledge that siddhis can be cultivated through the mastery of samadhi and jhana, and it is not even necessary that one be awakened to attain these powers. Hence the normal and common siddhis are considered 'mundane siddhis' in Buddhist teachings, whereas the true supramundane siddhi is simply liberation itself. Many Buddhist masters would actively discourage the pursuit of such powers/siddhis (at least before liberation is attained) as it often becomes a distraction from the more important goal of liberation itself.

However here is a short excerpt that reveals the gist to the attaining of siddhis:

"The Buddha particularly stresses a set of practices called 'the four roads to power' (iddhipada, or 'bases of success') as the means to winning the superknowledges. They are often described in the texts by a set formula that runs as follows:

Here, bhikkhus, a bhikkhu develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to desire and volitional forces of striving. He develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to energy and volitional forces of striving. He develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to mind and volitional forces of striving. He develops the basis for spiritual power that possesses concentration due to investigation and volitional forces of striving.

Here four separate mental factors are singled out as the main agents for developing concentration: desire, energy, mind, and investigation (*chanda, viriya, citta, vimamsa).* To ensure that the jhana attained will not merely engender a state of calm but will also serve as a repository of energy, each has to be accompanied by 'volitional forces of striving' (pandhanasankhara). These forces build up immense psychic energy which can then be tapped, by a suitable determination, to exercise the supernormal powers." - Great Disciples of the Buddha by Nyanaponika Thera & Hellmuth Hecker

Posted in AtR group:

On Siddhis: I like what Clarifying the Natural State says about it (very little, but relevant)
"Even though you have attained the realization of greater
One Taste, if you fail to have some degree of clairvoyance
and receive signs from the dakinis, you must be tainted by
damaged samayas. Therefore, make, for instance, a
thousand tsa-tsas or the like, and offer a flower to each of
them. Make the request, "May my defilement utterly
subside!" Perform the dharani-rituaI for purifying
defilement, as well as any other suitable virtuous practice."
...
"Your thoughts have become meditation if all dualistic
clinging, including mind and the perceived, etc. has dissolved.
Hence - free from the sense of being bound or
released in the six types of impressions - it is all right to
let whatever appears appear. They have not become
meditation if you need to liberate the impressions with a
reminder to recognize.
The qualities have arisen if, after mingling mind and
perceptions, you have attained miraculous powers, such as
being able to conjure and multiply. The qualities have not
arisen if the signs fail to appear due to the inducing circumstances
of the path being feeble. 19"
(19 Among 'inducing circumstances' are compassion, devotion,
perseverance and intelligence.)
...

"Presently, since you simply sustain the way of the natural
state and do not practice the path explained in the
causal vehicles, the signs of that path will therefore also
not appear. However, it is held that all the manifest qualities
will appear simultaneously and spontaneously once
you have perfected the strength of greater Nonmeditation.
Nevertheless, if you practice by mingling with the
Secret Mantra path of means, it is explained that the successive
signs of the Mantra path do appear.
There do exist several ways of combining in a detailed
way the twelvefold meditation training of the three-timesfour
yogas with the paths and bhumis of the philosophical
vehicles, but it is complicated to organize them meticulously."
https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=48&t=28525...
Malcolm: Siddhis do not equal enlightenment.
Kunga Lhadzom wrote: ↑
Yes...but Enlightened Buddhas can do all these things, and then some....
Do siddhis indicate levels of attainment or bhumi. ?
Malcolm:
No. Such powers can be cultivated by worldly meditators.
...
Malcolm: “Siddhis are not representative of the attainment of realization (in the Buddhist sense of the term). The corollary is that those who are realized (in the Buddhist sense of the term) do not necessarily attain siddhis.” -
https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=36&t=26425&hilit=tara+bhumi&start=80
...
Malcolm: "People with "powers" who are not on the path of Dharma are going nowhere other than lower realms. They do not have precious human births, and as such, are nothing other than objects of compassion.

I would rather obtain one line of Dharma teachings than attain all the mundane siddhis in the universe."
...
John Tan privately shared his experience with siddhis since around 2006/2007, including mind reading and others, although please don't ask him about this as he does not like to discuss these.
https://www.dharmawheel.net/viewtopic.php?f=77&t=22234...
Malcolm:
Samadhi is the cause and condition of being able to perceive the thoughts in the mind of another.
.....
Yes, it explains both how it is possible and how it works. When you are less distracted by your own thoughts, you can perceive the thoughts of others more easily. A mind is both unimpeded and unimpeding by nature. It should be taken literally.

...
Malcolm: Bodhisattvas are supposed to cultivate the five abijñas to be of benefit to other sentient beings. For example, being able to know the minds of other sentient beings means that one will automatically know what kind of teaching for which they are suited, etc. Buddha gave much advice of this kind.
Malcolm:
....
xabir wrote:
I was wondering then is Shakyamuni Buddha a "complete" or "inferior" Buddha, and if he attained complete Buddhahood does that mean he too practiced Dzogchen or Mahamudra or something similar, or did he truly walk the three aeons Mahayana way to Buddhahood? Also, I have heard lamas who say those who attain Buddhahood in one life (through Dzogchen, Mahamudra, etc) will not manifest all powers, omniscience, etc within their present life but will do so after death. What is your opinion?
Malcolm:
The Buddha was an emanation of compassion, so not inferior.
As to your second question, yes, such people do not necessarily manifest all qualities of realization in this life, but do so after death.
N

More on Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, as all his books are highly recommended reading, even from those outside the Mahamudra tradition, e.g. from people like Daniel Ingram to even Acarya Malcolm have recommended his books.

This one, Mahamudra the Moonlight by Dakpo Tashi:

"Some treatises state that even though one may have fully realized the mind as being the aspect of ultimate reality [dharmakāya], one might not have acquired the great qualities of enlightenment in this life, because one has not achieved the release from the threefold bondage, such as the body. This physical hindrance is compared to the eggshell that entraps the infant eagle. However, such an aspirant will, during the stages of his death, rise in an illusory form of consummate bliss [sambhogakāya], having just experienced the luminous awareness.
Referring to the belated realization of the great qualities, other people have criticized by saying that it is astonishing for the sunlight to appear tomorrow when the sun has already risen today. This is absolutely wrong: They ignored the treatises of esoteric Buddhism [vajraȳna], which proclaim that mystics will realize the enlightenment of dharmakȳa through the process of dying and of sambhogakāya through the intermediate state [bardo]. The

treatise entitled the Chaturdevīparipṛc
chī proclaims:
When one's physical vehicle of karma disintegrates,
Then, through one's spiritual power,
One will achieve such a body as one has aspired to.
This body will permeate all static and dynamic
phenomena,
The way space encompasses everything.
Understand that it remains so.
The Sampṭa affirms:
When one's physical vehicle of karma disintegrates,
One will attain a supreme form.
Keeping in view this matter [of attaining some of the
great qualities long after one has realized the spiritual
path], Je Shang states:
Misery may not completely disappear
Immediately upon realizing the [truth of] nonduality.
Who can deny that someone has attained the path of
insight,
Even though he has yet to realize the complete
qualities?
The early morning sun can neither melt frozen water
Nor heat the ground and stones at once.
Yet who can deny the existence of the sun?
Such sayings are consistent with the fact of human
experience. For instance, the new moon may be incomplete
in its form, yet it is still the moon. A child may not be fully
grown, yet it is still a human being. However undeveloped
a lion's cub, it is still a lion. In this respect Je Gyare
comments:
Even among the Arahats
There are two kinds:
Adorned and unadorned ones.215
Even among Bodhisattvas
There are two kinds:
Renowned and unrenowned ones.
Even in the mystic tradition
There are two kinds of mystics:
The ones practicing secretly and the ones doing it
amidst an assembly.
With regard to those who have attained realization
There are two kinds:
Those who can describe [knowledge] and those who
can demonstrate [it].

Regarding those who have attained the grounds and paths
There are two kinds:
Those who have understood the grounds and paths
And those who have achieved them.
As for the great meditators who have knowledge of the grounds and paths
And those who have realized [can demonstrate] them,
Some have fully achieved great powers of psychophysical transformation
While others have failed to attain them and others have achieved mixed abilities.
Some of them fulfill the needs of sentient beings,
While others fail to fulfill them.
This is due to the greater or lesser intensity of their practices.
I shall now sum up these sayings. The great qualities associated with the grounds and the paths, according to the treatises of the vehicle of dialectics, are revealed skillfully out of some higher motivation. The paths [of the four yogas] are not the same as these. Even the inner signs of realization on these paths are diffferent. Just as there existed adorned and unadorned Arahats and renowned and unrenowned Bodhisattvas, there are diffferent types of great meditators, some possessing the sublime power of transformation and others lacking this power, due mainly to the diffference in the quality of their practices. It has been said that in order to achieve the sublime power of transformation and other great qualities, one must strive hard on the path of the transient world and the higher path of mantraỹna.
With this I have completed the elucidation of the meditation on the Mahā̃mudrī of ultimate certainty, especially the diffferentiation of each of the four yogas and the methods for crossing the grounds and the paths of enlightenment."

"My advice is knowing our nature does not require us to "rojak" [Soh: turn quantum physics and spirituality into an eclectic mix] them at all and the benefits of practice is something very tangible. It can be realized, known and experienced including the supramadane abilities of buddha and bodhisattvas, the sambhogakaya body and buddhafields to those that are serious in practice. They maybe myth to some but not myth to me, at least it can be verified by first person experiences (imo) regardless how science think and that are already enough for me to cope." - John Tan, 2022

Session Start: Tuesday, April 17, 2007

(11:14 PM) AEN: btw wat you think about the supernatural topic (someone trained in shamatha asking for advice on development of siddhis/powers)

(11:14 PM) AEN: lol

(11:16 PM) Thusness: i wish i can discuss with him but he is not the person for me to discuss. :)

(11:16 PM) AEN: huh why

(11:16 PM) Thusness: anyway unless i am an irresponsible person, i will not discuss such thing in public forum.

(11:17 PM) AEN: oic

(11:17 PM) AEN: why is he not for you to discuss

(11:17 PM) Thusness: though i would very much like to.

(11:17 PM) AEN: icic

(11:18 PM) Thusness: in fact i have been looking for someone that have perfected non-duality to writing something about non locality, i have told you before.

(11:18 PM) AEN: oic

(11:18 PM) AEN: so wat are you saying.. you wan to discuss supernatural powers and non locality with someone?

(11:18 PM) AEN: as in someone non dual

(11:19 PM) Thusness: someone that has deep experience in non duality. :)

(11:19 PM) AEN: icic.. so tats why you don wan to discuss with the forum guy? cos he's not non dual yet?

(11:19 PM) Thusness: i do not wish to talk to people in samatha meditation.

(11:19 PM) AEN: why

(11:20 PM) Thusness: and only when i know the person is already enlightened. :)

(11:20 PM) Thusness: otherwise there is no point.

(11:21 PM) Thusness: and i do not want people to misinterpret the nature of these experiences.

(11:21 PM) Thusness: i also do not like people to bullshit about these experiences.

(11:21 PM) Thusness: and also do not like people to make fun of these experiences.

(11:21 PM) Thusness: lol

(11:21 PM) AEN: what you mean by bullshit and make fun

(11:21 PM) Thusness: i might leave something before my i die.

(11:21 PM) AEN: leave what?

(11:22 PM) Thusness: my experiences and how to get access to it after non-duality.

(11:22 PM) AEN: oic wat sort of experiences?

(11:22 PM) Thusness: u are not enlightened yet. :P

(11:22 PM) AEN: about supernatural powers? lol

(11:23 PM) Thusness: yeah. :)

(11:23 PM) Thusness: ur mind is not stable yet.

(11:23 PM) AEN: oic btw wats the uses of supernatural powers.. how can supernatural power help one and others

(11:24 PM) AEN: my mind not stable means?

(11:25 PM) Thusness: with your current state of mind, you will not be able to correctly absorb in whatever aspect.

(11:26 PM) Thusness: whatever that is necessary are already stated in sutras

(11:26 PM) Thusness: there is really no point bringing it out to discuss.

(11:26 PM) Thusness: what one experiences for me is to break the perceptual bond that prevent us from knowing some subtle aspects of our mind.

(11:27 PM) Thusness: that is too difficult to break by merely just accepting things.

(11:28 PM) Thusness: the way to access to paranormal experiences differs.

(11:28 PM) AEN: icic..

(11:28 PM) Thusness: however for one that has stabilize non dual path, it is the natural progression to experience something non-local

(11:28 PM) Thusness: some non-local aspect of our nature.

(11:29 PM) Thusness: to understand our nature.

(11:29 PM) Thusness: what good is there really to discuss the non local aspect of it besides that?

(11:29 PM) Thusness: i do not like to call it supernatural power.

(11:29 PM) AEN: oic..

(11:30 PM) Thusness: u can see that i seldom call it so.

(11:30 PM) Thusness: i call it non local aspects of our nature.

(11:30 PM) AEN: icic

(11:30 PM) Thusness: as it is part of our nature.

(11:30 PM) Thusness: in line with emptiness.

(11:30 PM) Thusness: i do not like to deviate from the profound teachings of emptiness.

(11:30 PM) AEN: oic..

(11:31 PM) Thusness: of our nature. :)

(11:31 PM) AEN: icic

(11:31 PM) Thusness: that is why i also do not wish to discuss with anyone that is on concentration.

(11:31 PM) Thusness: coz it is not about wisdom and our nature.

(11:32 PM) AEN: btw theres difference rite between someone who gain those powers from concentration, and those who become enlightened and those so called powers actually arise from prajna?

(11:32 PM) Thusness: if you want to know, know what is our nature and practice.

(11:32 PM) AEN: icic

(11:32 PM) Thusness: i do not know, i have not discussed with them. :)

(11:36 PM) Thusness: first is the realisation.

(11:36 PM) AEN: what you mean

(11:36 PM) Thusness: u must realise what is meant by non duality.

(11:36 PM) Thusness: what is no-self

(11:36 PM) Thusness: realisation.

(11:37 PM) AEN: icic

(11:37 PM) Thusness: like longchen

(11:37 PM) Thusness: experience it.

(11:37 PM) Thusness: then your dualistic thought will continue to confuse you.

(11:37 PM) Thusness: it is not easy to overcome

(11:37 PM) Thusness: until it has sunk so deep into your consciousness

(11:37 PM) AEN: icic..

(11:38 PM) Thusness: that one day your realisation and action become one...

(11:38 PM) Thusness: somehow you 'see' the pathless path towards non dual at every moment.

(11:39 PM) Thusness: but due to attachments, the experience of non duality through wisdom will not be thorough.

(11:39 PM) Thusness: so you must practice the other 5 paramitas

(11:39 PM) AEN: icic..

(11:40 PM) Thusness: then non dual in action can become one....to clear other forms of attachments and to further experience our boundless nature.

(11:40 PM) Thusness: but some of these bonds can be cleared if one is able to have non local experiences.

(11:40 PM) AEN: oic..

(11:41 PM) Thusness: certain attachments will subside due to these experiences.

(11:41 PM) Thusness: but the practice of the other 5 parimatas are more thorough.

(11:41 PM) Thusness: non local aspects of our nature if without sufficient wisdom will have side effects.

(11:42 PM) AEN: icic..

(11:42 PM) AEN: what side effects

(11:42 PM) AEN: 5 paramitas how does it help

(11:42 PM) AEN: in non attachment?

(11:42 PM) Thusness: to me side effects is always creating perceptual bond on other aspects.

(11:42 PM) Thusness: u eliminate one and you add 3.

(11:42 PM) Thusness: :)

(11:42 PM) AEN: oic...

(11:43 PM) Thusness: if non local aspects is experienced and you unknowingly add to our ego other form of bonds, then it is quite difficult to break.

(11:44 PM) Thusness: coz it was caused by non local experiences.

(11:44 PM) AEN: icic..

(11:44 PM) AEN: u mean like being identified/attached to having supernatural powers?

(11:45 PM) Thusness: one of them.

(11:45 PM) Thusness: or you may visit other realms and get attached?

(11:45 PM) Thusness: or you may contact spirits and be attached and dwell with them...

(11:45 PM) AEN: icic..

(11:45 PM) Thusness: u do not know... when you dwell...

(11:46 PM) Thusness: u may sink into deeper illusion into the realm that you have created without knowing

(11:46 PM) AEN: oic..

(11:46 PM) Thusness: it is not just a matter of ego. :)

(11:47 PM) AEN: yea teacher chen said

(11:47 PM) Thusness: it is our wisdom and clarity have not penetrated to the depth of seeing through these states.

On the duration it takes to attain Buddhahood:

[1:21 AM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: Have you listened to the Dan brown? [Soh: this is referring to another video -- https://www.fitmind.co/.../dan-brown-phd-meditation-great...]

[1:21 AM, 10/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: havent yet.. is it good?
[1:21 AM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: From I AM to non-dual to one mind to no mind
[1:22 AM, 10/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. but not anatta?
[1:22 AM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: To dzogchen, the view is the practice or view includes practice. You listen tomorrow, you will understand. Hale must be thinking that it is quite similar with the phases of insights 🤣 But I deleted that away in the comment
[1:25 AM, 10/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: oic.. why delete
[1:27 AM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: I dunno about dzogchen much, so I will stay with what I know and experience...lol. Instead of saying phases of insights are similar, will cause unnecessary issues...and I am not trying to come out some version of jaxchen or soh-chen...🤣🤣🤣
[9:23 AM, 10/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. you said it talks about no mind but it didnt mention about anatta realization?
[9:29 AM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: Yeah
[2:09 PM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: Frankly I like Dan brown video but the timeline is unrealistic.
[2:11 PM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: The steps are however clear.
Nauli for example. Even doing the centre extrusion will take few months of practice and to really churn the will take about 2 years. To churn and have sufficient control will take much more time. Even if you practice diligently as an exercise will take you probably 4-5 years to master.
[2:13 PM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: As for insights, it is not a matter of pointing out, the stability will take probably 10-25 years post anatta to even have stability and that is practicing quite diligently. Resting in appearances without observer and observed will take probably more time. Into 3 states IMO and experiences require another understanding and that is important. The key is in the message I told andre and asked you what are the other ways beside anatta and do for active mode of no-agency.
[2:16 PM, 10/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Oic.. but buddha said you can attain arahant between 7 days to 7 years just by practicing four foundations of mindfulness.. but i guess that timeline is for monks and often in retreat
[2:17 PM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: That is not Buddhahood
[2:17 PM, 10/8/2020] Soh Wei Yu: Ic.. but should have cleared the ten fetters right
[2:17 PM, 10/8/2020] John Tan: Yes. That is why I told you to ponder on the no agency part. You need to have that insight, otherwise it is just half done. In other words it is no self in active mode. Why is it half done? Because it is normally in passive mode. So your dreams will normally remain karmic.

(Elaborated more in: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2021/03/activeinactive-mode-of-no-self-duration.html)

...

Mr. J.J.:

What are the last arhats and Buddhas that have walked this planet that fulfill the criteria of AtR (clear 10 fetters, clear all mental obscurrations)?

What records do we have of them?

I am interested in cross referencing the ideas put forth in the old texts with something more recent. The chances that things have been changed through oral transmission is too high.

If there really isn't anything more recent, I'm a bit suspicious whether what's been passed down is really attainable or whether things have been changed for propaganda purposes. (religions are fairly political and often have their agendas for sacred texts to be read a certain way 😉)

Soh Wei Yu:

The problem with arahats is that monks and nuns have a precept that forbids them from announcing their claims to laypersons. This means arahants cannot make a public announcement, but he/she can tell his/her monastic colleagues, and you can basically snoop around for information as a layperson, but you can't be so sure.

There could be many that never saw the light of day because of that prohibition. I'm sure things would have been very different if Buddha did not create that rule, but nonetheless, he has his reasons. The good thing about creating a prohibition is that it could prevent outright chaos and run-off-the-mill monks who proclaim arahantship in order to gather disciples, for example. The bad side to the rule is that, well, we'll never know for sure who the real ones are, our best source of information is from asking around. Students of certain masters will tend to say their master is an arahant, because humans have their biases. I've heard Ajahn X is an arahant, although, he seems more prone to I AMness to me. Ajahn Z said he's an arahant, however he's still more into one mind than anatta. Although you hear about people saying this and that master is an arahant, I have never met one today that I am really convinced so far. Although I know of monks and nuns who realize anatta. There is also a Theravadin monk who realised anatta through AtR this year (previously went through I AM). He's quiet about his realisation publicly as you can see, maybe because of precepts. There could very well be monks and nuns today living quietly and have attained arhantship. But we may never know.

Realization of anatta is extremely rare these days, let alone further progression from anatta, although certainly anatta is no finality. This is a point John Tan complained about in
https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/12/vipassana-must-go-with-luminous.html

Nonetheless, we have the well known ones like Arahant Upatissa (1st century CE – 2nd century CE), Nagasena (150 BCE), who are well known to be arahants. They are universally agreed throughout Buddhism to be arahants who lived post-Buddha, and they have left behind very important texts. One of Nagasena's passage was crucial to John Tan's progression from anatta to emptiness.

As for Buddhas...

Among the three Buddhist traditions - Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana, only Vajrayana emphasizes the possibility of attaining Buddhahood in one life.

In both Theravada and Mahayana, scripturally, attaining Buddhahood takes three aeons minimum, as opposed to the possibility of attaining arahantship in one life, or maybe the first bhumi if you are a Mahayana practitioner.

However, we did see that certain Zen masters such as Bodhidharma elude to the possibility of attaining Buddhahood in one life, although not very elaborate. Not as elaborate as Vajrayana Buddhism.

That being said, my Chinese Buddhist master I took refuge under, who holds Linji Ch'an lineage, in following standard Mahayana scriptural understandings, is also of the view that attaining Buddhahood takes 3 aeons, although suggesting that attaining the first bhumi in this life is attainable.

Vajrayana is a species of Mahayana Buddhism, and their definition of Buddhahood is largely congruent. Rainbow body is equated with Buddhahood in Vajrayana.

As Arcaya Malcolm also pointed out, maps of awakening in Buddhism are governed by the elimination of the twin obscurations of affliction and knowledge, and that Dzogchen is the same in this respect.

According to the Vajrayana view, the difference between Vajrayana and Mahayana is not in the view or fruition, but in the expedients or methods or path of practice. It is said to be more efficient, according to their teachings, therefore making the possibility of Buddhahood in one life.

Many practitioners were understood to have attained rainbow body even up to modern times. Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith's Dzogchen teacher Kunzang Dechen Lingpa (who asked Malcolm to teach Dzogchen) is said to have proclaimed his own full enlightenment. Malcolm is of the view that he has removed all afflictions, basically, clearing those two obscurations... at least he said that in his talks.

I do not know too much about his teacher, so I cannot tell you any more information or verify any of it.

Soh Wei Yu:

Although it must be stated that Malcolm basically said it is extremely difficult, close to impossible (although with rare exceptions) that we can attain rainbow body in this life from being a lay person with a day job and so on. Usually it requires years, more than a decade possibly, of retreat practices. Most Dzogchenpa gets liberated in the bardo instead.

...

Asaf Bartov

So if I understand correctly, no 😂

A good question is would a full buddha from vajrayana side, be considered a full arhat according to the ten fetter model? Not so sure

Soh Wei Yu:

Malcolm's view is the same as Mahayana - a full Buddha is someone who removes all afflictive obscurations, just like an arahant, and additionally the cognitive obscurations.

Kyle Dixon can confirm.

But he did say Mahayana accepts that arhats, bodhisattvas, Buddhas, can manifest as lay persons.

(Also we have the famous example in Mahayana, Vimalakirti Sutra, of a lay person tenth stage bodhisattva)

I don't have an issue with the idea that someone can manifest as any manner of being out of compassionate purposes.

That being said, the key is that the two obscurations are removed.

...

The answer is "there could be" - we need to check out the recent rainbow body attainers. I'm not sure if any one are presently living.

Geovani Geo

badge icon

How are you going to check that while he is alive?

He may say that he attained. His disciples also may say he did. But that, eventually, may not be the fact, necessarily.

Soh Wei Yu

badge icon

According to Malcolm, there are very specific signs with regards to Dzogchen Togal practice that indicates that the practitioner has reached the finishing point of the fourth vision, the exhaustion of all phenomena into dharmata, the rainbow body/Buddhahood, etc. According to Malcolm, KDL has exhibited these signs in his practice, in addition to his own proclamations. He gave specific examples which I cannot recall now and may not be appropriate to give details in a public forum anyway.

But of course, it is not exactly easy to know who is an arahant or a Buddha, unless you have the psychic powers to read the minds of others.

There is a teaching by Buddha on how to test if someone is an arahant: https://suttacentral.net/mn112/en/sujato

However it should be only through long observation that one can determine - https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/KN/Ud/ud6_2.html "Great king, as a layman enjoying sensual pleasures; living confined with children; using Kāsī fabrics & sandalwood; wearing garlands, scents, & creams; handling gold & silver, it's hard for you to know whether these are arahants or on the path to arahantship.

"It's through living together that a person's virtue may be known, and then only after a long period, not a short period; by one who is attentive, not by one who is inattentive; by one who is discerning, not by one who is not discerning."

Also, http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.027.than.html

Bhikkhu Pesala:

"There is also this story that I have quoted a few times before:

A certain monk was living in dependence on an Arahant. Living in dependence meant that he shared the same room as his teacher, did all the duties for him, and carried his almsbowl for him while walking behind for alms. One day, while walking for alms, the pupil asked, “Venerable sir, how can one know whether another person is an Arahant?”

The Arahant replied, “It is not easy, friend, to know if another person is an Arahant. Even if one lived in dependence on an Arahant, did all the duties for him, and carried his almsbowl while walking behind him for alms, one might not know that his teacher was an Arahant.”

Even when given such a broad hint as this, the pupil did not realise that his teacher was an Arahant. The Arahants have stainless minds free from all pride and conceit. They do not boast of their attainments, unless there is no other way to help people."

Alan Smith

I'm not sure which stage enables one to sit in perfect composure as you are burned alive in an act of compassion (that was very effective at achieving it's intended end). Can Siddhi masters do this? An Arhant thing? Anagami?

Regardless, Thich Quảng Đức is evidence of what is possible:

David Halberstam wrote:

"I was to see that sight again, but once was enough. Flames were coming from a human being; his body was slowly withering and shriveling up, his head blackening and charring. In the air was the smell of burning human flesh; human beings burn surprisingly quickly. Behind me I could hear the sobbing of the Vietnamese who were now gathering. I was too shocked to cry, too confused to take notes or ask questions, too bewildered to even think ... As he burned he never moved a muscle, never uttered a sound, his outward composure in sharp contrast to the wailing people around him."

3

Soh Wei Yu

badge icon

Alan Smith

John Tan has a Thai monk master who was not so much into insight (Soh: the Thai master attained I AM realization), but his samadhi and meditation was super powerful. He burned one finger, that is hard enough, and he burned his second finger right after that. He had fever etc.

He talked about it in the AtR group meeting but I haven't transcribed that part.

(Soh: There's a Chinese article on this monk posted by John Tan: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2018/08/wat-tham-khao-rup-chang.html)

· Reply

· 1m · Edited

Update: Thrangu Rinpoche is the latest practitioner/teacher to attain Buddhahood. See: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2023/11/thrangu-rinpoche-attained-buddhahood.html

Thrangu Rinpoche Attained Buddhahood / Rainbow Body

Interesting that Thrangu Rinpoche attained rainbow body/Buddhahood. I enjoy reading his teachings very much.

From an email I received:

Thrangu Rinpoche's Passing

Namo Buddha Publications

The Miracle of Thrangu Rinpoche's Passing

Thrangu Rinpoche was in the hospital in June, 2023 and being quite ill, he asked to return to his Namo Buddha Monastery. There he went into meditation posture and passed away on June 4th doing the Rainbow Body (jalung) which is done only by advanced practitioners. His heart and breathing stopped and he remained in this position for four days. His skin was fresh and there were no signs of deterioration. There are two kinds of Rainbow Body: one in which the lama vanishes into thin air leaving behind only hair and fingernails, and the other is for the body to shrink. Thrangu Rinpoche's body began to shrink in perfect proportion, which included his bones, to less than his half size. These are pictures that I took at Thrangu Rinpoche's cremation on November 4, 2023.

1VRL Entrance to Namo Buddha complex Photo 1&2. Namo Buddha is about 20 miles from Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Thrangu Rinpoche had his attendant, Lekshe buy the land from a Nepali farmer. Namo Buddha is the third most sacred Buddhist spot in all of Nepal where a previous Buddha gave his flesh to a starving tigress.

2VR. Namo Buddha Thrangu Rinpoche's monastery is very large with a large shrine room quarters of over 100 monks. This dining hall is to the left. There were 2,000 persons from all over the world attending the cremation

3VR. Front of Shrine Room Photo 3: This is the large shrine room at Namo Buddha where practitioners went up and made offerings and bowed their head on the edge of the shrine. The kundun with yellow curtains is where Rinpoche’s body is the square box on the shrine which is about two feet square and three feet high.

4VR. Closeup of Kundun Photo 4: This is a close up of the kundun and the yellow brocade was lifted a little on the last day when I took this picture.

5VR. Cremation ground Outside Photo 5 This is the outside of the area where the cremation took place. The white coverings were to protect the audience and the four Rinpoche’s from the four lineages who sat in each of the four directions of the crematorium. This stadium had over a 1,000 chairs. This area specially prepared held 2,000 people and was just a short walk from the monastery. You can see trees covering the whole mountain that Vajra Vidya is on.

6VR. Cremation Ground inside Photo 6 I did my knowledgeable estimation of the number who attended and came up with 2,000 people. A staff member who said that is what they also estimated.

7VR. Crematorum Photo 7and 8. This is the crematorium which had four opening in each direction. There was a procession of high lamas and monks carrying the kundun in and then placing Rinpoche’s body in the crematorium.

8VR. Placing Body in creamatorum Here we can see one of the lamas helping place the body in the crematorium.

9VR. Burning of body Photo 9. At 10:30 the fire was lit and sacred grass, oils, and precious substances were added to the burning body. It burned for about an hour. 3 days later the ashes will be recovered to see if there are any relics among them.

10. Body in Crematorium Photo 10: Through one of the four holes in the crematorium, you can see Thrangu Rinpoche's body. My camera is not that good, but it looks to me like he is facing (north) toward us and has an elaborate headdress on.

11VR. Mahkala Rock decorated hoto 11: I almost forgot. There was a large black rock that Thrangu Rinpoche identified as being Mahakala or representing Mahakala (I am not sure) but they dug it up and turned it over and displayed it very prominently at the cremation.

It is important that we Buddhist share what we know. If you are really interested, you can email me and I will send you 43 pictures that are 20 inches long and 13 inches wide and of high quality for printing (300DPI) along with 4 short videos (total of 1.6 gigs).

Clark Johnson

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——-

John Tan/Thusness talked positively about Thrangu Rinpoche's teachings since the very first year I talked with him, back in 2004. He also recommended me to read his books.

2007:

(10:39 PM) Thusness: there are so many good articles and clarity in writings and explanations by some tibetan guru.

(10:39 PM) AEN: icic like who

(10:39 PM) Thusness: thrangu rinpoche

(10:40 PM) Thusness: there are quite a few but i forgotten who..

(10:40 PM) Thusness: read them b4 on the web.

Soh Wei Yu

Jan

03

All Thrangu Rinpoche 58 Books at $35 (only 60 cents per book!)

Tan Jui Horng shared a link.

Admin

· tg6678a8063oshlu ·

Can't remember if this deal was already around when the website was mentioned sometime back. But you can get all of Thrangu Rinpoche's books for $35 now in pdf. Incredible

namobuddhapub.org

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Namo Buddha Publications ALL 58 OF THRANGYou RINPOCHE'S BOOKS (ON SPECIAL DOWNLOAD) [PDF02] - Thrangu Rinpoche is author of 60 books on Buddhism. You need only to peruse this book section to see all the different topics Thrangu Rinpoche has taught on. We have made PDFs of each of these books and made...

2 Comments

Soh Wei Yu

Admin

Thrangu Rinpoche materials are all highly recommended.

See also Kyle Dixon's recommendation: https://www.reddit.com/.../best_resources_for_vajrayana.../

User avatar

level 1

krodha

· 2 mo. ago

Thrangu Rinpoche's Pointing out the dharmakāya is good.

Also Dakpo Tashi Namgyal's Clarifying the natural state and the associated commentary Crystal clear.

3

May be an image of text

.

(Soh's comments: I highly recommend reading the three books recommended by Krodha at least - "

Thrangu Rinpoche's Pointing out the dharmakāya is good.

Also Dakpo Tashi Namgyal's Clarifying the natural state and the associated commentary Crystal clear.")

Reply

· 7h

Mr. KOÖ

Soh Wei Yu pointing out the Dharmakaya is really great.

1

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Reply

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· 48m

Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, Mahamudra, Thrangu Rinpoche |

NAMOBUDDHAPUB.ORG

Namo Buddha Publications , Namo Buddha Publications Source of Thrangu Rinpoche's teachings

-
- Reply
- Remove Preview
- 1d

-

Love Koh

Soh Wei Yu Hi Mr Soh 🙏, Thankyou very much for sharing 👍💎👑✨💟🙏

-
-
    - Reply
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-

Mr. UM

Wow, great to hear! Thanks for sharing. Just checked my mails and found it as well 🙂

-

-
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-

Norge Leone

Interesting that there was no real rainbow body witnessed in this century?

-
    - Reply
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    -

Soh Wei Yu

Norge Leone Thrangu Rinpoche attained real rainbow body, and several others this century and the last.

-

-
    - Reply
    - 1d
-

Love Koh

Norge Leone There is , in the early 90's , during Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's parinirvana , he manifested the sign of the rainbow body in which his body shrink in size , due to his Compassionate Bodhicitta to save & benefit sentient being , he has return to his world as the young Khyentse Yangsi Rinpoche 🙏

- Reply
- 1d
- Edited

Norge Leone

Soh Wei Yu no, you obviously don't know what is rainbow body, read the text again. This one is a 'small' rainbow body like all others in this century.

- Reply
- 1d

Soh Wei Yu

Norge Leone Dzogchen teacher Acarya Malcolm Smith said before, "Rainbow body where the body shrinks and disappears is a sign of incompletely finishing the fourth vision in this life." " A body disappearing does not equal rainbow body. Often, when people realize rainbow body, their bodies just shrink."

But as far as I know, all are still rainbow body, regardless of the type. They are all Buddhahood.

- Reply
- 51m

Soh Wei Yu

Acarya Malcolm Smith:

“ Most people who achieve realization from Dzogchen do so in the bardo of dharmatā. Only the best of best obtain rainbow body in this life or have small rainbow body.”

“The body of light aka rainbow body is simply the body reverting back to the five lights of wisdom. The sign of this is that at death the body shrinks to a very small size."

" Rainbow body is buddhahood. So any standard description of a Buddha's experience of the inexhaustible ornamental wheel of the body, speech, mind, qualities, and activities of the Buddha would apply. "

" "Rainbow body" is a name for what happens when the elements of body reverts back to their original nature as pristine consciousness as a result of the process of Dzogchen practice or completion stage practice. A key point of Vajrayāna is that there is no buddhahood that is not grounded in the body. Hence, the attainment of rainbow body, or the body of light, is regarded as proof that a practitioner has attained buddhahood. This is never mentioned in sūtra because sūtra has no methods of practice that involve the body as a vehicle for awakening."

As for the type of Buddhahood that is the rainbow body where body shrinks vs disappear entirely:

Someone asked, "I have read of two kinds of rainbow bodies: the one where the body shrinks and the second where the body disappears entirely."

Acarya Malcolm said, "The first is partial rainbow body."

Tomamundsen: "Is partial rainbow body the 16th bhumi, buddhahood without remainder?"

Acarya Malcolm said, "No. It is Buddhahood with signs."

-
-
  - Reply
  - 1m
-

Sim Pern Chong

Amazing 😮

Update:

There's another book by Thrangu Rinpoche recommended by John Tan around 2009 -

Essentials of Mahamudra: Looking Directly at Mind

- https://namobuddhapub.org/store/index.php?main_page=product_info&products_id=98

Labels: Buddhahood, Mahamudra, Rainbow Body, Thrangu Rinpoche |

Concluding notes

On the Non-Linear and Non-Hierarchical Unfolding of Insights

“Also, even though I presented my journal as if there is a kind of linear progression going on, in truth we should not see these stages/phases as strictly linear or having a hierarchy. For example, some are able to understand the profound wisdom of emptiness from the start but have no direct experience of luminosity, then luminosity becomes a later phase. So does that mean the most pristine experience of "I AM" is now the last stage? On the other hand, some have experienced luminosity but do not understand how he got himself 'lost', as there is no insight to the karmic tendencies/propensities at all, therefore dependent origination cannot be adequately understood. But does that mean that the one that experiences emptiness is higher than the one experiencing luminosity?

Some people experience non-dual but do not go through the I AM, and then after realizing non-duality the I AM becomes even more precious because it brings out the luminosity aspect more. Also, when in non-dual, one can still be full of thoughts, therefore the focus then is to experience the thoroughness of being no-thoughts, fully luminous and present... then it is not about non-dual, not about the no object-subject split, it is about the degree of luminosity for these non-dualist. But for some monks that is trapped in luminosity and rest in samadhi, then the focus should be on refining non-dual insight and experience. For non-dualists, depending on the level of understanding, one can move forward and backward, there is no hierarchy.

So just see the phases as different aspect of insights of our true nature, not necessarily as linear stages or a 'superiority' and 'inferiority' comparison. What one should understand is what is lacking in the form of realization. There is no hierarchy to it, only insights, all of which are important. Understanding this means that one will be able to see all stages as flat, no higher.

And as I told my friend: There is no order of precedence how the phases of insight can unfold for people. Some experience/realize I AM after non-dual, some before. Just like Joan Tollifson puts it: rather than a linear stage progression, sometimes it is more like a spiral going back and forth, even though that is also just a relative perspective of things.

The spiralling continues until one sees with utter conviction that all phenomena shares the same taste, that everything in its primordial purity is Dharmakaya itself.

That being said, although there is no strict order of precedence of insight (i.e. not everyone starts with the realization of I AM), of late, I and John realized that it is important to have a first glimpse of our luminous essence (i.e. the I AM realization) directly before proceeding into understanding non-dual, anatta and dependent origination. Sometimes understanding something (e.g. emptiness/dependent origination) too early will deny oneself from actual realization as it becomes conceptual. Once the conceptual understanding is formed, even qualified masters will find it difficult to lead

the practitioner to the actual 'realization' as a practitioner mistakes conceptual understanding for realization.

Therefore, if I were to make an advice to 'beginners' reading this, my advice would be to start with the practice of self-inquiry (though this is by no means the only method, it is one which is very direct and one which I am familiar with), realize the certainty of Being (the I AMness), then progress from there to investigate the non-dual, anatta, and empty nature of Presence. However it also depends on the person's interests and inclinations and he/she should discern for themselves.

One thing that is unique about this book is that it covers such a wide range or spectrum of insights - I AM, the aspects of I AM, Non-Dual, Anatta, Emptiness and Maha/Dependent Origination, etc. John once told me that there are no books currently available that he knows of, that actually covers all his 7 stages of enlightenment. My journal perhaps is unique in covering many of those insights he mentioned, all in one single book. However, how relevant each section is to a person would highly depend. If you are reading this, I recommend getting some basic understanding of what is I AM, non-dual, anatta and emptiness, but if for example, you still do not realize what is I AM, I would suggest that you focus more on the I AM and self-inquiry section first, in terms of practice.

Lastly, I see enlightenment as nothing mystical. It is simply the lifting of veils by practice and insight to reveal subtler aspects of reality. Once we lift conceptual thoughts, we discover I AM. Once we lift the bond of duality, we experience and discover non-dual awareness. Once we lift the bond of inherency, we experience and discover the absence of agent and a wonderfully luminous yet empty universe occurring via dependent origination." - excerpt from Soh's E-Book

"...not to limit experiences by framing it into the phases strictly. Limiting it this way is also limiting how you see and experience your life. That is precisely the essence of consciousness, empty and luminous. Only difference is whether it is realized or simply conceptual. I read new age and YouTube, some are very good and enlightening. I look into yoga and energy practice to understand and open my understanding. There are always things to be learnt." - John Tan, 2019

"(9:52 AM) Thusness: I think so far over the period you know me, i have not said this person is sotapanna or arahat... or whatever stage. even for the phases of insights I wrote, I have you told you umpteen times that it is about insights....not about stages... the appearance of the progression of insights from "I AM" to "Self-liberation" is merely due to my conditions.

(9:52 AM) Thusness: an example would be pegembara article relates more to phase 6 insight and that is how it unfold for him. He may have other realizations in the 7-phases of insights later in his journey. But I truly have no idea how it became a model to validate other's phases of enlightenment in such a short span of time...lol. Frankly i am really not interested what stage I am in now.... however i am fully indebted to Buddha's teaching of anatta and dependent origination and what is important now is to fully embrace this view into my moment to moment of experience and sink these realizations of anatta and emptiness into the deepest depth of my consciousness. You have tasted the benefits at such a young age, do not waste your valuable 'conditions'. Treasure it. :) I do not think practitioners at stream entry can realize the breadth and depth of DO. I think ananda is already above stream entry right but to Buddha, he has not

understood DO correctly. think there is a conversation something like that, that he thinks Dependent Origination is easy to understand *(Soh: This scripture: https://www.dhammatalks.org/suttas/DN/DN15.html The Great Causes Discourse Mahā Nidāna Sutta (DN 15))*" - John Tan, 2011

2007:

(3:48 PM) Thusness: "Amala Vijnana you need to study the Vajrasamadhi-sutra - this is the ultimate sutra teaching, even more so than the Samdhinirmocana Sutra!"

there is no ultimate teaching. :) it is a person's "hui geng". a simple line, a simple text, theravadin teachings all can lead one to the ultimate realisation. a simple world 'no-self' and 4 lines can lead one the great perfection too. :)

(3:51 PM) AEN: oic.. hmm ya the first 5 arhats became enlightened by learning 4 noble truths only lol

(3:52 PM) Thusness: :) all sutras depend on "yuan" and one's "geng xin". it we say it is high, we are deluded. if we say it is low, we are also deluded. middle path is a path without any form of intrinsic-ness. where can we find a highness? where does it reside? upon conditions it arises. 8 months ago if i talked about emptiness, to JonLS it may sound stupid and of lower grade compare to non-dual experience. 8 months later he think otherwise

(3:54 PM) AEN: oic..

(3:55 PM) Thusness: is heart sutra (a sutra about emptiness) greatest for him? what if a person start with heart sutra? i will tell him about "I AMness". not even non-duality. for longchen i will tell him second door and not heart sutra first

(3:55 PM) AEN: oic.. why will you tell someone who start with heart sutra about i amness

(3:56 PM) Thusness: for you i tell all to let you have right knowledge. in the past i only tok about no-self and not relating it to non-dual. now we tok about non-dual and compare with vedanta and advaita. but it doesn't mean which is higher truth. just conditions and right medicine. :)

(3:57 PM) AEN: oic.. btw why will you tell someone who start with heart sutra about i amness

(3:58 PM) Thusness: luminosity. emptiness nature might be understood, not the luminosity aspect

(3:59 PM) AEN: icic.. emptiness nature understood without luminosity is only conceptually isnt it? need amness first then can experience stage 6?

(3:59 PM) Thusness: nope. need mindfulness. but amness is a short cut if one has experienced emptiness nature. it will not present itself as wrong understanding

Other Writings by John Tan

If you like to read more of John Tan's writings, check out:

On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection
Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives
Early Forum Posts by John
Part 2 of Early Forum Posts by John
Part 3 of Early Forum Posts by John
Early Conversations Part 4
Early Conversations Part 5
Early Conversations Part 6
John's Conversations Between 2004 to 2012
A casual comment about Dependent Origination
Leaving traces or Attainment?
Emptiness as Viewless View and Embracing the Transience
Bringing Non-Dual to Foreground (John wrote this to me after I was having nondual experiences after I AM but before anatta realization)
Putting aside Presence, Penetrate Deeply into Two Fold Emptiness (John wrote this to me after I was having a deeper insight into anatta after an initial realization of anatta)
Reply to Yacine
Direct Seal of Great Bliss
The Unbounded Field of Awareness
Comments section of The Buddha on Non-Duality
Why the Special Interest in Mirror?
What is an Authentic Buddhist Teaching?
The Path of Anatta
The Key Towards Pure Knowingness
The place where there is no earth, fire, wind, space, water
AtR Blog Posts Tagged Under 'John Tan'" - Soh, 2019

A Practice Summary

Thusness (John Tan) wrote to Kim123 in 2009 who he thought would more appropriately benefit from Vipassana instructions (in contrast to starting with self-enquiry as outlined in this guide):

“As a start it is almost not possible not to feel dualistic. An observer observing the observed is our ordinary experience and it will appear that this is an experiential fact. Therefore we should not rush into anything but just simply recognize the ‘cause’. The cause that made us see in such a way is termed ‘ignorance’. Try to understand ‘ignorance’ not as not knowing but a form of knowing instead. See it as a very deep form of ‘dualistic knowing’ that we have taken it to be truth. We then proceed to overcome this wrong view in 2 steps; one by strongly and firmly establishing the right view to replace our existing ‘dualistic and inherent view’ and second, practice seeing in bare attention to lessen the grip of views. Practice being bare in bodily sensation till there is a very strong clear mirror feeling in bodily sensation. Then with the right view, non-dual will dawn. Without the right view, it will most likely turn into a mirror reflecting phenomena experience.

Practices can take decades and often quite frustrating and challenging during the journey. But have faith, be patient and have confidence, all effort will prove worthwhile eventually.

A simple summary I use to help my practice:-

When there is simply a pure sense of existence;

When awareness appears mirror like;

When sensations become pristine clear and bright;

This is Luminosity.

When all arising appear disconnected;

When appearance springs without a center;

When phenomena appears to be on their own without controller;

This is No Doer-ship.

When subject/object division is seen as illusion;

When there is clarity that no one is behind thoughts;

When there is only scenery, sounds, thoughts and so forth;

This is Anatta.

When phenomena appears pristinely crystal;

When there is merely one seamless experience;

When all is seen as presence;

This is Non-dual Presence.

When we feel fully the unfindability and unlocatability of phenomena;

When all experiences are seen as ungraspable;

When all mind boundaries of in/out, there/here, now/then dissolve;

This is Emptiness.

When interconnectedness of everything is wholly felt;

When arising appears great, effortless and wonderful;

When presence feels universe;

This is Maha.

When arising is not caged in who, where and when;

When all phenomena appear spontaneous and effortless;

When everything appears right every where, every when;

This is Spontaneous Perfection.

Seeing these as the ground of all experiences;

Always and already so;

This is Wisdom.

Experiencing the ground in whatever arises;

This is Practice.

Happy journey."

...

John Tan also wrote in 2013,

“Intelligent Knowingness as permanent... continuous... so many projections into time... so involved in mind conceptualities... Deconstruct seer, what happens is just this spontaneously manifested scenery

Deconstruct body further, you have mind-body drop

Deconstruct time, there will only be this clear vivid presence of immediacy

After arising insight of anatta, there is only “directness” and simplicity... go beyond conventions and conceptuality and recognize this immediate radiance is exactly what is appearing in this instantaneous moment...

If you are in need of a view for practice, then embrace the general principle of Dependent Origination that doesn't entertain who-when-where construct, it will help sever dualistic and inherent propensities. Otherwise you will have to go back to the koan I asked you when I first met you in IRC... this moment ceases as it arises, is this moment arising or ceasing? If you are clear, then further penetrate this total exertion of immediacy and realize that though there is vivid appearances, there is nothing here... nothing now... you will never find it!"

There are a lot of subtleties to spirituality, so John Tan often warns about those who advocate its simplicity, like what he wrote in early 2010:

https://sgforums.com/forums/1728/topics/391975/

"....What David Carse said requires more than the "I AMness" realization you narrated in your post "Certainty of Being". It also requires more than just glimpses of the non-dual state that can be induced by penetrating the question:

"If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?"

It requires a practitioner to be sufficiently clear about the cause of 'separation' so that the perceptual knot that creates the 'division' is thoroughly seen through. At this phase, non-dual becomes quite effortless. The three following articles that you posted in your blog are all about the thorough insights of seeing through the illusionary division created by mental constructs. They are all very well written. It is worth revisiting these articles.

1. Body/No-Body

2. The Teachings of Atmananda and the Direct Path

3. The Direct Path

Of all the 3 articles, I like Joan's article Body/No-body best. Do not simply go through the motion of reading, read with a reverent heart. Though a simple article but is not any less insightful than those written by well-known masters, it has all the answers and pointers you need. 😳

Next, there are several points you made that is related to the deconstruction of mental objects but you should also note that there exist a predictable relationship between the 'mental object to be de-constructed' and 'the experiences and realizations'. For example "The Teachings of Atmananda and the Direct Path" will, more often than not lead a practitioner to the realization of One Mind whereas the article from Joan will lead one to the experiential insight of No-Mind. As a general guideline,

1. If you de-construct the subjective pole, you will be led to the experience of No-Mind.

2. If you de-construct the objective pole, you will be led to the experience of One-Mind.

3. If you go through a process of de-constructing prepositional phrases like "in/out" "inside/outside" "into/onto," "within/without" "here/there", you will dissolve the illusionary nature of locality and time.

4. If you simply go through the process of self-enquiry by disassociation and elimination without clearly understanding the non-inherent and dependent originated nature of phenomena, you will be led to the experience of "I AMness".

Lastly, not to talk too much about self-liberation or the natural state, it can sound extremely misleading. Although Joan Tollifson spoke of the natural non-dual state is something "so simple, so immediate, so obvious, so ever-present that we often overlook", we have

to understand that to even come to this realization of the "Simplicity of What Is", a practitioner will need to undergo a painstaking process of de-constructing the mental constructs. We must be deeply aware of the 'blinding spell' in order to understand consciousness. I believe Joan must have gone through a period of deep confusions, not to under-estimate it. 😳"

John Tan often warned against thinking that Buddhadharma is so simple because actually it is very profound and hard to fathom, just as the Buddha has said so himself many times. And John Tan also asked before - of all the sutras, which one of them is so simple and easy to understand? None of them is, so one should not oversimplify the dharma by making statements like "dharma is so simple, it just so and so" because people will miss out the subtleties. I am not exaggerating when I say that about 98% of "awakened" people, advanced practitioners, even teachers are stuck at I AM and one mind, so it will be naive for beginners to try to pin down the dharma in oversimplistic statements and think they got the whole picture. At the same time it is truly possible that with the right pointers and effort to come to direct realization of the dharma, as many people have even today.

But when I say 98% of awakened people have not realised anatta and/or emptiness, it does not mean it is incredibly difficult to do so. With the right pointers, it is not so difficult, so do not fear. As of writing about 40 people have at least realised anatta after encountering the Awakening to Reality blog. What the data shows is that an open mindedness to contemplate is necessary, and with the right pointers it is truly possible, even highly probable, to realise. However, many people are stuck in a system where all the teachers and teachings reinforce that substantialist view and therefore they do not even want challenge their view or investigate further, which is why they do not go beyond I Am or One Mind, even though they may be diligent practitioners. If you tell them about anatta, they might just shrug it off.

Conclusion

The map is not the territory, and not everyone goes through the exact same path, practices, or the same linear unfolding of phases. Still, I am confident that most people seeking truth and freedom will find something useful in there. It is the key to the realization and actualization of the nature of mind/reality and effortless spontaneous presence. This guidebook is meant to be a practical manual, not a piece of philosophy. It is experiential. To see results, you have to put in quality time into practicing this, meditating and contemplating. May you attain awakening and liberation for the benefit of all beings. May this guide be of benefit to all readers.

"All 7 phases of insight can be realized and experienced, they are not verbiage. But perfection in terms of actualization in everyday life requires refining our view, meeting situations and dedication of quality time in anatta and total exertion. The problem is that many do not have the discipline and perseverance." - John Tan, 2014

This guide is based on the materials of the Awakening to Reality Blog (a blog co-authored by John Tan and Soh Wei Yu) and the Awakening to Reality Discussion Group **(note: this group is now closed, however you can join to access the old discussions. It is a treasure trove of information.)**.

For Further Reading

- 1) John/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment
- 2) On Anatta (No-Self), Emptiness, Maha and Ordinariness, and Spontaneous Perfection
- 3) Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives
- 4) Experience, Realization, View, Practice and Fruition
- 5) Book Recommendations 2019 and Practice Advices
- 6) Kyle Dixon's writings

Glossary

Aggregates: Buddha taught that there are five aggregates that makeup a conventionally labelled "human being", that is, form, feelings, perceptions, volition and consciousness.

One of the messages of this teachings is no-self and dependent origination. Sentient beings conceive of a self to exist within this body-mind, but the Buddha taught that when examined, we find no such thing as a singular entity that we can pin down or establish as a self. Instead, all we find/experience is a composite, a heap of flesh, blood and bones, with no self within or apart from the five aggregates or composite which are all transient, ungraspable, unsatisfactory and empty of a self. No "self" could be pinned down inside or apart from the aggregates in the same way that no "chariot-ness" can be pinned down inside or apart from the parts of it - the wheel, etc. It is simply aggregates being conventionally imputed as such. There is no abiding or intrinsic reality/existence. These aggregates co-dependently arise and are empty of any self, anything pertaining to an I, a me, or a mine.

Anatta: non self, empty of self

Awareness/Mind/Consciousness: Similar to luminosity, this gets refined on ones journey. Initially we think we are beings who have awareness and look out into a world, later it is seen that awareness is none other than what is appearing in experience, all sights, sounds, feelings, thoughts etc.

Bahiya Sutta: a famous discourse by Buddha on non-self that led Bahiya to liberation upon listening. See: The Buddha on Non-Duality

Dependent Origination/D.O.: Every arising, every manifestation, every experience arose dependent on causes and conditions. This principle was originally discovered and taught by the Buddha:"When there is this, that is. With the arising of this, that arises. When this is not, neither is that. With the cessation of this, that ceases."

Dharma: in the context of teachings, like “Buddhadharma”, it is the teachings of Buddha, or the teachings of truth. In the context of appearing phenomena, such as “all dharmas are not-self”, they refer to a unit of experience, activities, arising phenomena or manifestations.

Dharma seal: the nature of phenomena/experiential reality, always already so.

Dhatus: Eighteen dhatus (elements), another teaching of the Buddha. “There are, Ānanda, these eighteen elements: the elements of the eye, sights, and eye consciousness; the ear, sounds, and ear consciousness; the nose, smells, and nose consciousness; the tongue, tastes, and tongue consciousness; the body, touches, and body consciousness; the mind, thoughts, and mind consciousness. When a mendicant knows and sees these eighteen elements, they’re qualified to be called ‘skilled in the elements’.” - MN115

Emptiness: the absence of a real existence of a self or an entity that can be pinned down or established

Luminosity: cognizance, clarity, presence, knowingness, aliveness, intelligence, consciousness, sense of existence, sense of reality, the knowing quality present in experience. This gets refined as we mature in insight. Note that the term ‘luminosity’ may vary according to the source, some Tibetan teachers use it to refer to the aspect of presence-awareness, some may refer to the unity or clarity and emptiness, some scriptures may be referring to just the aspect of emptiness. It can be a confusing term but generally this guide-book uses it to refer to the aspect of clarity/presence-awareness.

NDNCDIMOP: Non-dual, non-conceptual, direct and immediate mode of perception. (Also similar to PCE)

PCE: Pure consciousness experience. This term’s usage was popularized by the Actual Freedom foundation. Excerpt from their site: “A pure consciousness experience is a temporary, ‘self’-less and sensuous experience of the perfection and purity of the actual universe. A PCE offers a glimpse or window out from the ‘real’ world everyone is born into (and therefore assumes to be all there is), and one suddenly finds oneself in the unimaginable, magical, fairytale-like actual world.

For a brief period, there is no ‘self’ as a mediator, interpreter, censor or spoiler. All is directly evidenced by the physical senses to be pure, perfect, delightful. One’s intelligence is freed of any emotions and affective feelings – thinking becomes benign, clear and concise – free of malice and sorrow. The already-existing innate purity and perfection that becomes stunningly apparent in this ‘self’-less state instantly renders redundant the need for any morals, ethics or any kind of ‘self’-control. With awareness and intelligence operating totally freed from the Human Condition, ‘I’ can then be clearly seen for what ‘I’ am – a parasitical identity who is the source of ‘my’ own suffering and ‘my’ own malice.”

Also see: Various Descriptions of Pure Consciousness Experiences

Presence/Beingness - Doubtless certainty of existence/life. Discovered with I Am realization - see Stage 1 chapter.

The Place Where There is No Heat or Cold: A monk asked Tozan, "When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?" Tozan said, "Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?" The monk said, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?" Tozan said, "When it's cold, the cold kills you; when it's hot, the heat kills you." This is not advice to "accept" your situation, as some commentators have suggested, but a direct expression of authentic practice and enlightenment. Master Tozan is not saying, "When cold, shiver; when hot, sweat," nor is he saying, "When cold, put on a sweater; when hot, use a fan." In the state of authentic practice and enlightenment, the cold kills you, and there is only cold in the whole universe. The heat kills you, and there is only heat in the whole universe. The fragrance of incense kills you, and there is only the fragrance of incense in the whole universe. The sound of the bell kills you, and there is only "boooong" in the whole universe...
~The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing, Ted Biringer

Two Cessations: An excerpt from https://www.rigpawiki.org/index.php?title=Cessation

"Cessation is of two kinds:

analytical (Skt. pratisaṃkhyā-nirodha; Tib. སོ་སོར་བརྟགས་པའི་འགོག་པ་, sosor takpé gokpa, Wyl. so sor brtags pa'i 'gog pa) and non-analytical (Skt. apratisaṃkhyā-nirodha; Tib. བརྟགས་མིན་འགོག་པ་, tak min gokpa, Wyl. brtags min 'gog pa).
In his commentary to Mipham Rinpoche's Khenjuk, Khenpo Nüden writes:

Analytical cessation
This is the unconditioned aspect of the permanent elimination of destructive emotions and other factors to be eliminated, through the force of developing realization of the undefiling path, such as the wisdom of discernment, within the mind.

Non-analytical cessation
This does not refer to the ceasing of latent habitual tendencies as a result of analysis and investigation, but rather to the absence of a given thing in a particular place due to an incompleteness of necessary causes and conditions, as in the case of horns on a horse's head, for instance. Another example which is mentioned in the commentaries is the fact that other types of consciousness do not arise when the eye-consciousness is distracted by a visual form. This also includes all the various forms of non-existence (or absence), such as the absence of a vase in a particular place."

Two-Fold Emptiness: "Two emptinesses (二空) include (1) emptiness of self, the ātman, the soul, in a person composed of the five aggregates, constantly changing with causes and conditions; and (2) emptiness of selves in all dharmas—each of the five aggregates, each of the twelve fields, and each of the eighteen spheres, as well as everything else with no independent existence. No-self in any dharma implies no-self in a person, but the latter is separated out in the first category. Realization of the emptiness of self in a person will lead to attainment of Arhatship or Pratyekabuddhahood.

Bodhisattvas who have realized both emptinesses ascend to the First Ground on their Way to Buddhahood." - from an online Buddhist glossary

Book Recommendations and Practice Advise

'If you want to 明心 (comprehend Mind) reading some zen and awareness teachings will help [Soh: also, advaitic and self-enquiry materials will help]. If you want to 见性 (see [empty] nature) you need to explore deeply into emptiness and MMK (Mulamadhyamikakarika of Nagarjuna). If you want to have a feel of 自然之道 (the Way of self-so/naturalness/spontaneity), read about 老子 (Lao Tzu) 道德经 (Tao Te Ching), 列子 (Lieh Tzu) 冲虚经 (Chong Xu Sutra) and 庄子南华经 (Chuang Tzu's Nan Hua sutra)。Go read about them, it will help you a lot.' - John Tan, 2019

'All these teachings are not pointing to the same things at all. All of them have a different purpose and intent but can be integrated. Therefore do not think that Brahman = Emptiness = Tao. You should read the teachings on their own terms, that is how you can properly understand the import of each teaching. Brahman is not talking about Emptiness, Emptiness is not talking about Tao. I don't agree with perennialist notions that all teachings point to the same ultimate.' - Soh, 2019

Lately I have successfully guided a few people. As of now, more than 30 people have realised anatta through encountering this blog, myself or Thusness, a feat rarely achieved by dharma teachers. (Buddha had thousands of enlightened students but that's another story) This is only possible due to the use of modern technologies that allows easy access worldwide and the unique clarity of Thusness's writings (I'm sure Thusness will be quite displeased with me for stating my opinion openly, haha).

However in the future I do not foresee that I will have time to do personal coaching. It is also not fruitful to neglect one's practice, as a deva addresses the following verse to Ven. Ānanda as Ven. Ānanda had been spending too much time teaching Dhamma to laypeople, *"Coming to the bower at the root of a tree, placing unbinding in your heart, do jhāna, Gotama, don't be heedless. What use is this chitter-chatter to you?"*. This is why recently I have compiled a list of articles so that the essentials are covered and sufficient for one's personal contemplation, and do not require any personal coaching.

It is advisable to find and learn from a highly awakened spiritual teacher. Read Finding An Awakened Spiritual Teacher and Mentor

I have also updated Thusness/PasserBy's Seven Stages of Enlightenment with further clarifications towards the end of the article as I found that many people who read that article continue to misunderstand those stages.

Plenty of words and discussions are pointless, sometimes (in fact, often times) just one stanza is enough to trigger one's awakening if taken seriously in one's practice. Bahiya attained liberation upon hearing a single verse of Dhamma from the Buddha. As Buddha said in the Dhammapada, *A man is not versed in Dhamma because he speaks much. He who, after hearing a little Dhamma, realizes its truth directly and is not heedless of it, is truly versed in the Dhamma.* However, as Thusness pointed out before, unless one has directly realized the truth of anatta, and one's view and practice is completely refined, pointers from good teacher(s) and/or clear dharma books are still necessary.

Only after direct realization of anatta (Thusness Stage 5) does it become "safe" to explore on one's own, "because after anatta, one is able to see what is meant by direct, gapless and pure, and he is on his own to mature this experience, until the next phase comes" (See: The Path of Anatta by Thusness), and "all practitioners must experience for themselves and not read". (One can still read, but it takes secondary role in one's practice) On another occasion, Thusness said, "Only after seeing the 6 phases of insights, you can then be said to be safe to explore on your own. The actual experience cannot be communicated." And as Thusness commented about Simpo (Sim Pern Chong) after he had certain breakthrough realizations, back in 2007, "given enough time, whatever he said will be like Buddha. But he need not read what that is taught by Buddha. However by reading it, it may help him and speed up his progress.", "...longchen (Sim Pern Chong) has realised the importance of transients and the five aggregates as Buddha nature, time for unborn nature. You see, it takes one to go through such phases, from "I AM" to Non-dual to isness then to the very very basic of what Buddha taught... can you see that? The more one experience, the more truth one sees in what Buddha taught in the most basic teaching. Whatever longchen experience is not because he read what Buddha taught, but because he really experience it."

We are blind at the start, pointers from good teachers and books bring us to the right track, and once we're in the right track, we will have to boldly walk forward ourselves. Unfortunately very clear teachers and clear books are hard to come by, so I try to provide a list of good resource that can be of help. I seldom read dharma books nowadays, though I have read plenty years ago. Even back in my army days (compulsory national service, about 8-9 years ago) I read thousands of pages of Buddhist scriptures, thousands of pages of dharma books, thousands of pages of non-Buddhist texts. It has been of help along my journey. But nowadays, I am more interested in actualizing my insights in living experience.

Many have awakened to anatta through reading this blog and contemplating accordingly, without personal coaching. And what I can advise is already documented in my blog articles, Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book, and I think I have covered all the essentials quite thoroughly. If you have realized anatta through this blog, do write to me, I might even post your story up. Always good to hear an inspiring story.

After reading those articles and Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book, if you still have doubts that need to be clarified, you're welcomed to contact me. However if you have not read through those articles and/or Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book, please do so first, as otherwise I will simply be directing you to the existing articles that addresses your questions. Perhaps try doing a search on this blog to find your answer.

Someone asked me for book recommendations. What books you should read depends on where you're at, what practices you're doing, what realization you're aiming for.

If people ask me for advice on where to start, I usually recommend self-inquiry with the aim of attaining Self-Realization (the doubtless realization of I AMness). If you're still trying to attain I AM realization, focus on the books listed under the Self Inquiry sections. If you feel like you're having glimpses and experiences of the I AMness/Witness, do note that there are differing degrees and having glimpses and experiences are not the same as having the direct realization and complete certainty of I AM/Self. See I AM Experience/Glimpse/Recognition vs I AM Realization (Certainty of Being) and the first point in Realization and Experience and Non-Dual Experience from Different Perspectives by Thusness - anything short of the unshakeable and doubtless certainty of Being is not the I AM realization but more like a glimpse or experience. Self-inquiry will lead to the realization. I had glimpses of I AM experience for 3 years prior to the doubtless and unshakeable Self-Realization in February 2010 after less than 2 years of self-enquiry, which I detailed in my e-book, after which the Self/Presence/Awareness was no longer 'maintenance state' or passing glimpses for me and the certainty of what I am was never lost, I no longer felt the 'lose it/gain it' syndrome.

If you have realized I AM, focus on the four aspects of I AMness and other advices in Awakening to Reality: A Guide to the Nature of Mind and my e-book and the two types of nondual contemplation.
If you're already past I AM and/or nondual but aiming for anatta realization, just focus on Bahiya Sutta contemplation and its related articles, read The Sun My Heart by Thich Nhat Hanh especially the chapter on 'There is Knowing in the Wind' and 'Each Action is its Own Subject', you need a more direct apprehension mode of contemplation, like the way Daniel M. Ingram describes Vipassana here or how practice and contemplation is described in Gesture of Awareness).

If you think you already realized anatta, more often than not, you haven't. Most people who say they realized anatta are only having a more minor realization of non-doership or having experience of no mind, or are unable to distinguish between Thusness Stage 4 and 5. It is also common to fall into the disease of non-conceptuality, mistaking that as the source of liberation and thus clinging to or seeking a state of non-conceptuality as the main object of practice, whereas liberation comes only through the dissolving of ignorance and views (of inherent existence) that cause reification, by insight and realization. See: The Disease of Non-Conceptuality
Hence, do go through all the links in the comments section of Thusness Seven Stages of Awakening and read the article carefully before making a diagnosis on where you are as it is very common to think that one is there when one is not.

If you truly realized anatta and are wondering how to progress, read Advice for Taiyaki and +A and -A Emptiness (On the two experiential insights involved in Thusness Stage 6)
Also, it is very important to understand that having a conceptual understanding of no-self, dependent origination and emptiness is very different from direct realization. As I told Mason Spransy in The Importance of Luminosity, it is very possible to have the conceptual understanding of Thusness Stage 6 but lacking in direct realization, as that was his issue

at that time. Days after that conversation he had direct realization of anatta and total exertion (see: Suchness / Mason Spransy). As Thusness pointed out in Purpose of Madhyamaka, if after all the analysis and contemplations of Madhyamaka (Buddhist emptiness teachings taught by Nagarjuna) one is unable to realize that the mundane is precisely where one's natural radiance is fully expressed, a separate pointing is necessary.

If you have attained all Thusness 7 Stages, do note that it is not a finality but the beginning of endless actualization. Have you perfected all elements of the Noble Eightfold Path? If your insight is clear, how about samadhi ("right concentration")? Furthermore, wisdom is just one aspect of practice. Another equally important aspect of practice is compassion or metta, which you can read more on your own from other sites, beginning with Metta Sutta. This blog hasn't dealt as much in topics like samadhi and metta/karuna, compared to topics on insight and wisdom. This is not because meditation, samadhi and metta/karuna are less important subjects, but there are resources out there that deals with these subjects quite thoroughly. Having a daily and disciplined meditation practice is important (refer to books under Mindfulness Practice/Meditation below). On the other hand, the insights and wisdom presented here by Thusness are very rare, and the clarity on the distinction of View, Realization and Experience can hardly be found elsewhere, therefore I have placed more effort to present these insights/wisdom aspect of the practice. As Thusness pointed out to me, there has to be a balance between insight, samadhi and compassion, in the sense that all these aspects are important in one's practice. Thusness is also deep into Yoga and energy practices and sees that as important for further progression in one's practice after insights, however it is beyond the scope of this blog at the moment, as I myself am not at the level of expertise like Thusness. It is important to have an "integral" approach to practice rather than skewing towards insight.

Regardless of where you're at, I still recommend reading the 'General Buddhadharma' books to get a rough understanding of Buddhadharma, even if one hasn't realized it yet.
Lastly, if you can find a spiritual community and living teacher, it can be of immense benefit for you. Thusness adviced before to "find a good teacher that has gone through the various phases of insights, at least until phase 5 of insight. However [in phase 5] one might still miss certain point [disregarding Dependent Origination]". Realistically speaking, it is quite hard to find someone who has at least realized Thusness Stage 5. That realization is very rare. For example, I searched around in my country and did not find any, though I can find lineage teachers at the I AM and Non Dual phases of insight (Stage 1 to 4). However, it should be known that whether the teacher has the exact same understanding of dharma, or whether he/she is coming from a very deep level of realization, there are always things that can be learnt, and a community of practitioners can be of a great help and encouragement to one's practice. Therefore I hope you will not have too much of an expectation for a dharma/meditation teacher, such as an expectation for a teacher to be fully realized. If there is someone who can help you grow spirituality, then seek their guidance. But you yourself must have clear understanding of dharma, have right views, and not be misguided. So read through this blog and the book recommendations. Group practice of sitting meditation can often be beneficial, it is something you have to experience for yourself. Refer to the book *Meditation Now or Never by Steve Hagen* for advice on how to find a good and qualified meditation teacher and practical advices on meditation. You need to overcome the common issues of 1) motivation, 2) monkey mind, 3) drowsiness. Mindful awareness is key, it solves dullness or drowsiness. Tranquility and release is key, it solves monkey mind. Consistency and discipline is key, getting habituated

to a consistent practice solves the issue of motivation, especially when one tastes the higher state of bliss and clarity from meditation. I currently practice Anapanasati (Mindfulness of Breathing) and Satipatthana (Four Foundations of Mindfulness) while actualizing my insights like how Suzuki Roshi describes. This actualization is not confined to sitting but continues in everyday life (also see: What is Total Exertion?). See also: How silent meditation helped me with nondual inquiry
Happy New Year and may you attain Nirvana and realize all appearances are fundamentally in Nirvanic quiescence - the unity of two truths.

"The affairs of the world will go on forever. Do not delay the practice of meditation."

- Milarepa

“Do not waste time but practise zazen (Just Sitting) as if your hair were on fire.”

- Dogen Zenji

“The reason why we delay practicing is because we always think that we have more time. When you wake up in the morning, you should always say to yourself, “I am still alive – I did not die. I should finish this great work. There is no tomorrow.””

- Man-Gong

Try to buy these books from a local Buddhist or spiritual bookstore. Support them, as they certainly need your support more than soon-to-be-trillionaire Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos. Not that I have anything against Amazon, but I would rather support the local less well-off small businesses. Wouldn't you?

Not in any particular order -

General Buddhadharma

Buddhism Is Not What You Think by Steve Hagen (see some excerpts in https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2010/04/buddhism-is-not-what-you-think.html)
Buddhism Plain and Simple by Steve Hagen
What the Buddha Taught by Walpola Rahula

Mindfulness Practice/Meditation

Why do I need meditation training?
Meditation Now or Never by Steve Hagen

The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh
Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life by Thich Nhat Hanh
The Sun My Heart: Reflections on Mindfulness, Concentration, and Insight by Thich Nhat Hanh
Quietening the Inner Chatter

On Theravada/Vipassana

Gesture of Awareness: A Radical Approach to Time, Space, and Movement by Charles Genoud (excerpts can be found here)
Mastering the Core Teachings of Buddha 2nd Edition by Daniel M. Ingram, available in hardcopy for purchase, or online for free: https://www.mctb.org/
The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha, translated by Bikkhu Nanamoli and Bikkhu Bodhi
"Udana" and the "Itivuttaka": Two Classics from the Pali Canon by John Ireland -- Bahiya Sutta is in this
The Dhammapada: A New Translation of the Buddhist Classic with Annotations Paperback – by Gil Fronsdal
Measureless Mind by Geoff - https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2012/09/great-resource-of-buddha-teachings.html
The Breakthrough by Ajahn Amaro
In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon (The Teachings of the Buddha) by Bhikkhu Bodhi
The Connected Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Samyutta Nikaya (The Teachings of the Buddha) by Bhikkhu Bodhi
Early Buddhism's Model of Awakening

On Zen

Flowers Fall by Hakuun Yasutani
The Flatbed Sutra of Louie Wing by Ted Biringer
Zen Cosmology by Ted Biringer
Living By Vow by Shohaku Okumura
The Mountains and Rivers Sutra by Shohaku Okumura
Infinite Circle: Teachings in Zen by Bernie Glassman
Hakuin on Kensho: The Four Ways of Knowing, Edited with Commentary by Albert Low
Eihei Dogen: Mystical Realist by Hee-Jin Kim
Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind by Shunryu Suzuki
Hearing with the Eye: Photographs from Point Lobos by John Daido Loori
Yasutani-roshi's Introductory Lectures on Zen Training - https://terebess.hu/zen/mesterek/yasutani.html
Eight Gates of Zen by John Daido Loori
The Art of Just Sitting: Essential Writings on the Zen Practice of Shikantaza by John Daido Loori
Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind by Suzuki Roshi

Man on Cloud Mountain | Shodo Harada Roshi in America

On Mahamudra

Poems of Mahamudra in the blog Luminous Emptiness and its comments
Clarifying the Natural State by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal (some excerpts in http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2008/11/few-excerpts-from-clarifying-natural.html)
Essentials of Mahamudra by Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche
The Royal Seal of Mahamudra by Khamtrul Rinpoche III (some excerpts in http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2015/12/self-liberation-by-khamtrul-rinpoche-iii.html)
Mahamudra: The Moonlight -- Quintessence of Mind and Meditation by Dakpo Tashi Namgyal (note: a new translation can be found called Moonbeams of Mahamudra and it also includes another text by the ninth karmapa, check it out here)
Garland of Mahamudra Practices by Khenchen Konchog Gyaltshen
An Ocean of the Ultimate Meaning: Teachings on Mahamudra by Khenchen Thrangu
The Gelug/Kagyu Tradition of Mahamudra by Dalai Lama (Author), Alexander Berzin (Author)
Lamp of Mahamudra by Tsele Natsok Rangdrol

On Dzogchen

Way of Bodhi by Yogi Prabodha Jnana and Yogini Abhaya Devi
Dzogchen vs Advaita, Conventional and Ultimate Truth by Kyle Dixon (also see linked articles inside)
Self-Liberation through Seeing with Naked Awareness by Padmasambhava
Buddhahood in This Life by Malcolm Smith
(also check out the interview at http://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.sg/2017/11/podcast-with-malcolm-smith-on-dzogchen.html)
The Self-Arisen Vidya Tantra (vol 1) and The Self-Liberated Vidya Tantra (vol 2): A Translation of the Rigpa Rang Shar (vol 1) and A Translation of ... (vol 2) (The Seventeen Dzogchen Tantras)
by Malcolm Smith
https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2018/08/the-self-arisen-vidya-tantra-vol-1-and.html
Books by Tsoknyi Rinpoche
A Garland of Views: A Guide to View, Meditation, and Result in the Nine Vehicles with a commentary by Jamgon Mipham (Padmasambhava's Classic Text)

On Madhyamika

How to See Yourself As You Really Are by Dalai Lama (Greg Goode has some good chapter summaries for this book in https://greg-goode.com/article/dalai-lama-summaries/)
Greg Goode on Advaita/Madhyamika

The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way by Nagarjuna/Jay Garfield
Introduction to the Middle Way: Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with Commentary by Ju Mipham
Ocean of Reasoning: A Great Commentary on Nāgārjuna's Mulamadhyamakakārikā by Tsong khapa, Translated by Geshe Ngawang Samten and Jay L. Garfield
Seeing that Frees by Rob Burbea (see: A Summary of Seeing that Frees by Rob Burbea)
In Praise of Dependent Origination by Tsongkhapa
Emptiness Yoga: The Tibetan Middle Way by Jeffrey Hopkins
A Sun That Never Sets
Kyle Dixon's Audio Recordings and Word Documents from Reddit Postings

On Tibetan Buddhism

Jamgon Mipham by Douglas Duckworth
The Dharma's Gatekeepers: Sakya Pandita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet by Jonathan C. Gold
Mipham's Dialectics and the Debates on Emptiness: To Be, Not to Be or Neither
A Garland of Views: A Guide to View, Meditation, and Result in the Nine Vehicles - Padmasambhava's classic text with a commentary by Jamgon Mipham
On Chittamatra/Yogacara
Distinguishing Phenomena from Their Intrinsic Nature with Commentaries by Khenpo Shenga and Ju Mipham (The Dharmachakra Translation Committee)
Mahayana Sutras (Scriptures)
The Heart Sutra (The most famous Mahayana sutra today. Short and brings out the essence of emptiness succinctly.)
The Diamond Sutra by Red Pine (This one triggered the awakening of 6th Ch'an Patriarch Hui-Neng)
The Lankavatara Sutra by Red Pine (This one was brought to China by 1st Ch'an Patriarch Bodhidharma, Thusness likes it very much)
The Samdhinirmochana Sutra by John Powers (Another sutra Thusness recommended 10+ years ago)
All the Sutras and Tantras as translated by 84000
Lopon Malcolm: "The most highly revered Sūtra in India was the Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 lines."
The Perfection of Wisdom in 8000 Lines
Vimalakīrtinirdeśa Sūtra
Non-Arising of Phenomena is the Most Vital and Definitive TeachingThe Mahayana Model of Awakening

Others

A New Buddhist Path by David Loy
The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Liberation Through Hearing In The Bardo by Chogyam Trungpa (Author), Francesca Fremantle (Author) (comments by Soh: I posted some excerpts of this book in my article Fearless Samadhi)
Nonduality by David Loy

A Brief History of Everything by Ken Wilber (comments by Soh: I like what Ken Wilber writes, but I also find that the critique on Ken's metaphysical beliefs very valid as well - http://www.integralworld.net/visser99.html and furthermore, Ken Wilber mischaracterized the teachings of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, an issue I pointed out in A Common Wrong Explanation of Hinayana vs Mahayana)
This Is It: and Other Essays on Zen and Spiritual Experience by Alan Watts
The Book: On the Taboo Against Knowing Who You Are by Alan Watts
The Wisdom of Insecurity by Alan Watts
A Process Model by Eugene T. Gendlin
Ecodharma: Buddhist Teachings for the Ecological Crisis by David Loy

Books for People Seeking Self-Realization (Realization of I AMness) and/or are Practicing Self-Inquiry

My e-book has a chapter on Self-Inquiry: https://www.awakeningtoreality.com/2010/12/my-e-booke-journal.html
The Direct Path to Your Real Self
Who am I? by Ramana Maharshi
Some Writings on Self-Enquiry and Non-duality by Ken Wilber
Essentials Of Chan Practice (Hua Tou/Self Enquiry) by Ch'an Master Hsu Yun
All books by Eckhart Tolle (perhaps start with The Power of Now – this is always the first book that I pass to friends and relatives if they show an interest in spirituality, as it is easy to read, inspiring and practical – it is a #1 New York Times bestseller that sold millions of copies)
The Untethered Soul by Michael A. Singer (if you like Eckhart Tolle's books, read this one too. It is another #1 New York Times Bestseller in a similar vein and also sold over a million copies. This book also teaches about Self-Enquiry ala Ramana Maharshi)
True Meditation by Adyashanti
These youtube videos:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lCrWn_NueUg
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=783GbeforeKbzGY
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymvj01q44o0
All books by Ramana Maharshi
Sri Ramana Maharshi - JNANI 2018
Sailor Bob with John Wheeler, Feb 2012
The best non duality teachers: Meeting with John Wheeler Part 1
The Way of Liberation by Adyashanti (free PDF here)
All writings/books by Ch'an Master Hsu Yun
All books by John Wheeler (See writing: Awakening to the Natural State: Guest Teaching by John Wheeler. Also: A sample of John Wheeler's book 'You Were Never Born')
The Simple Feeling of Being by Ken Wilber
Ken Wilber - I Am Big Mind
Descartes: Reviving the West's Greatest Modern Vedantist

Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark: The Korean Buddhist Master Chinul's Excerpts on Zen Practice
What Am I? A Study in Non-Volitional Living by Galen Sharp
Advaita Vedanta
Standing as Awareness: The Direct Path by Greg Goode
The Direct Path: A User Guide by Greg Goode
After Awareness: The End of the Path by Greg Goode
Anything by Ramana Maharshi, Rupert Spira, Ramesh Balsekar and Nisargadatta Maharaj

Neo-Advaita

Anything by Tony Parsons
Perfect Brilliant Stillness by David Carse
Anything by Jeff Foster
Comments: Neo-Advaita is good at pointing out nondual ala Thusness Stage 4 and in Tony Parsons' case more like Stage 5 especially recently, but I do not agree with their 'nothing to do' philosophy and neglecting conditionality/karmic propensities.
And as Thusness wrote before, "People that have gone into the nihilistic understanding of 'non-doing' ended up in a mess. You see those having right understanding of 'non-doing' are free, yet you see discipline, focus and peace in them. Like just sitting and walking... ...in whatever they endeavor. Fully anatta."
Christian Mysticism
Resurrecting Jesus: Embodying the Spirit of a Revolutionary Mystic by Adyashanti
Days of Awe and Wonder: How to Be a Christian in the 21st Century by Marcus J. Borg
Dream Yoga and Practices
Dream Yoga: Illuminating Your Life Through Lucid Dreaming and the Tibetan Yogas of Sleep by Andrew Holecek and Stephen LaBerge
The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep by Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche and Mark Dahlby
Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu and Michael Katz
Yoga and Energy Practices
Yoga in the Kashmir Tradition: The Art of Listening
Yoga Unveiled by Godfrey Devereux (http://www.satcit.com/ebooks for PDF or http://www.satcit.com/books for paperback)
Light on Yoga by B. K. S. Iyengar
Open Heart, Open Mind: Awakening the Power of Essence Love by Tsoknyi Rinpoche

Non-Traditional

The Wonder of Presence and The Silent Question by Toni Packer
Anything by Joan Tollifson
Books by Judith Blackstone

Actual Freedom: Richard's Journal by Richard Maynard
(http://actualfreedom.com.au/sundry/orderformpaypal.htm)
Comments:
Toni Packer is an ex-Zen successor-in-line of Zen Master Philip Kapleau, Toni was later influenced by anti-authoritarian/iconoclastic spiritual teacher J Krishnamurti and left her tradition. She founded the Springwater Center. Toni Packer was able to express the non-dual insight of anatta well along with mind-body drop. Like J. Krishnamurti, she placed emphasis on 'choiceless awareness'.
Joan Tollifson was a student of Toni, as well as a follower of other neo-Advaita teachings/teachers.
However, besides the great insights expressed in Toni and Joan's books, my main criticism of their approach is similar to what Thusness wrote before,
"After this insight, one must also be clear of the way of anatta and the path of practice. Many wrongly conclude that because there is no-self, there is nothing to do and nothing to practice. This is precisely using "self view" to understand "anatta" despite having the insight.
It does not mean because there is no-self, there is nothing to practice; rather it is because there is no self, there is only ignorance and the chain of afflicted activities. Practice therefore is about overcoming ignorance and these chain of afflictive activities. There is no agent but there is attention. Therefore practice is about wisdom, vipassana, mindfulness and concentration. If there is no mastery over these practices, there is no liberation. So one should not bullshit and psycho ourselves into the wrong path of no-practice and waste the invaluable insight of anatta. That said, there is the passive mode of practice of choiceless awareness, but one should not misunderstand it as the "default way" and such practice can hardly be considered "mastery" of anything, much less liberation."
In 2013, Thusness said, "Anapanasati is good. After your insight [into anatta], master a form of technique that can bring you to that the state of anatta without going through a thought process." and on choiceless awareness Thusness further commented, "Nothing wrong with choice. Only problem is choice + awareness. It is that subtle thought, the thought that misapprehend (Soh: falsely imputes/fabricates) the additional "agent"."
“A state of freedom is always a natural state, that is a state of mind free from self/Self. You should familiarize yourself with the taste first. Like doing breathing meditation until there is no-self and left with the inhaling and exhaling... then understand what is meant by releasing.”
For those who have not yet gone into one mind, Judith Blackstone has some good techniques for accessing non-dual awareness and transparency, although more from the perspective of one mind.

Related: Bahiya Sutta, Dispassion and Spontaneous Perfection
Practice Before AND After Anatta
Non-Doing and Actualization
Non-Action
Non-Meditation and Daily Activities“ - Soh, https://awakeningtoreality.blogspot.com/2017/12/book-recommendations-2017.html

Yin Ling's Book Recommendations

Thank you Yin Ling (Soh: a practioner with insights into anatta and emptiness and has written many insightful posts which I shared in the AtR blog) for answering to my request to compile her book recommendations.

Yin Ling

esnotm7317tf2lm1694ua3 ·

Finally sit down and go through my libraries and listed down the books I personally love, both dharma and dharma related.

I won't categorise them bec I really do not think in category when I buy or read. All of them contributed to my insight and learning in its own way. If I feel it's too much for me I put it aside and come back to it again when I have new insight, things usually open up. That's how I read.

A lot of theravada books I didn't list, coz I read them early in the path say before 2019-2020.. I don't remember clearly so I won't list them.

Pls also recommend me some books if not in the list. Much appreciated 🙂.

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Book recommendations (Dharma)

1. Awakening to reality e-book guide written by Soh Wei Yu in his blog awakeningtoreality.com
2. seeing that frees Rob Burbea
2. How to see yourself as you truly are HHDL
3. Clarifying the natural state DTN
4. Awake Angelo DiLullo MD
5. The method of no method Chan master Sheng Yen
6. The sun my heart TNH
7. Buddhahood without meditation
8. Death Joan tollifson
9. Royal seal of Mahamudra 1 and 2
10. Enjoying the ultimate TNH
11. Awakening the heart (sutra commentary) by TNH
12. Hakuin on Kensho commentary by Albert low
13. The end of your world Adyashanti
14. Emptiness dancing Adyashanti
15. Practical insight meditation Mahasi Sayadaw
16. Mastering the core teaching of the Buddha Daniel Ingram
17. No death no fear TNH
18. Tsongkhapa praise for dependent relativity
19. Mindfulness in plain English Bhante G
20. The supreme source CNN

21. Grist for the mill Ram Dass
22. How to realize emptiness Gen and Wallace Lamrimpa
23. Emptiness Greg Goode
24. Being time shinshu Roberts
25. Realizing genjokoan by shohaku okumura
26. The practise of Dzogchen Translated by tulku thondup
27. Natural liberation Padmasambhava
28. Finding rest in meditation/ nature of mind/ illusion by longchenpa - illusion is my fav
29. Insight into emptiness Tegchok
30. The other shore TNH (heart sutra commentary)
31. Call me by my true names TNH's poetry collection
32. Mindfulness Joseph Goldstein - core Buddhist teachings like textbook
33. Introduction to emptiness Guy Newland
34. Under the bodhi tree and heart wood of the Bodhi tree Buddhadhasa Bikkhu
35. The grand delusion Steve Hagen
36. A path with heart Jack kornfield
37. Bringing home the dharma Jack kornfield
38. Food for the heart ajahn Chah
39. The mind illuminated culadasa
40. The power of now ET
41. 洪文亮法师 writings (link can be found on ATR blog)

MMK

1. the sun of wisdom
2. Jan westerhoff
3. Nargajuna mark siderits
4. The feast for the fortunate
5. Nargajuna vigraharyavartani

ATR related

1) free ebook
2) all the recommended post in the blog

On the right panel

3) thusness old forum posts back in circa 2005-2008
4) all the transcripts - 4 of them I think

Others (indirectly to dharma)

1. the body keeps the score Bassel van der kolk (trauma)
2. Drugs and alcohol book by prof David nutt
3. Dopamine nation
4. The noonday demon Andrew Solomon (an anatomy of depression)

5. When breath becomes air Paul kalanithi
6. Attached amir Levine (attachment theory for relationships)
7. Dying to be me Anita moorjani
8. Atomic habits James clear
9. Tiny habits BJ fogg

awakeningtoreality.com
Awakening to Reality

1 Comment

-

Soh Wei Yu
Nice! Thanks for the effort Yin Ling

-
- Reply
- 8m

Labels: Books and Websites Recommendations, Yin Ling 0 comments | |

Appendix

A Visual Diagram of John's Seven Stages

Note: The Seven Stages are not presented here as a rigid ladder of attainment. They are a pragmatic map of experiential insights and view-corrections. Different practitioners may unfold these insights in different orders or revisit them repeatedly. The main point is not status or hierarchy, but the clarification and integration of view, realization, and experience.

Previous version: draft visual diagram by Peter Wang

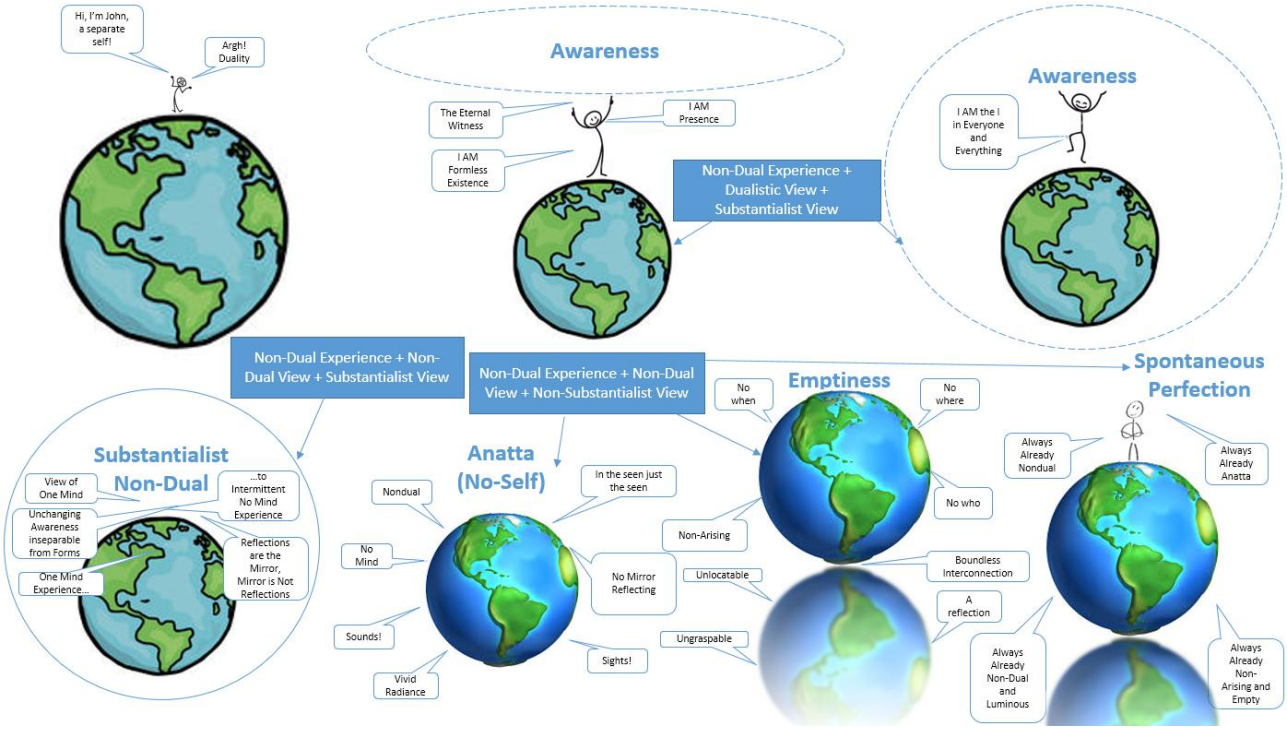

Figure A: Previous draft version by Peter Wang, retained for comparison.

Updated version: mandala visual diagram

Figure B: Updated mandala version of John Tan's Seven Stages, shown as seven insights, total presence and countless expressions - not as a ladder of attainment.

Summary Table of the Seven Stages

This table is intended as a compact orientation aid. It should be read together with the full chapters, especially the sections on view, realization, experience, anatta, emptiness, total exertion, and spontaneous perfection.

Stage	Core realization	Experiential flavor	View correction	Practice pointer	Common pitfall
1. I AM / Eternal Witness	Doubtless certainty of Being / Presence-Awareness prior to thought: "I AM I."	Still, formless, self-authenticating Presence; often felt as a background Witness or mirror-like awareness.	Recognizes Presence, but usually still separates background awareness from foreground phenomena.	Self-inquiry: "Who am I?", "Before birth, who am I?", "What is aware before thought?"	Reifying Presence as an unchanging Self, Witness, Atman, or metaphysical background.
2. I AM Everything	The I AM expands into all appearances: wherever there is presence, it is not apart from "me."	Vast, universal, intimate, all-inclusive Being; everything seems to arise within/as Presence.	Softens personal identity, but may universalize selfhood into cosmic Self.	Deepening I AM into all perceptions; recognizing Presence in everything.	Mistaking universalized Being or cosmic consciousness for final realization.
3. Entering into Nothingness	Letting go of the "I" through surrender into nothingness/source.	Oblivion, silence, absorption, spontaneity, Tao-like naturalness.	Sees the burden of self-effort, but may not clarify luminosity or emptiness.	Surrender; dropping mind, body, knowledge and control.	Mistaking blankness, oblivion, or passivity for liberation.
4. Presence as Mirror Bright Clarity	Collapse of subject-object division; Presence is recognized in the manifold.	Non-dual clarity; sound, sight and sensation are vivid as Presence, while a subtle "one mirror" may remain.	Corrects gross duality, but may still hold an inherent universal Awareness inseparable from appearances.	Bahiya Sutta contemplation; "Where does awareness end and manifestation begin?"; anatta stanzas.	Substantialist non-duality: one Awareness appearing as many.
5. No Mirror Reflecting / Anatta / Firstfold Emptiness	No mirror behind reflections; only vivid appearances/processes. No seer, hearer, thinker, doer, or agent.	Ordinary sights, sounds, thoughts and actions are self-luminous and centerless.	Cuts through the background Witness and one-mirror view; anatta is realized as a dharma seal.	First and second anatta stanzas; Bahiya Sutta; investigate seer/seeing/seen and doer/deed.	Mistaking non-doership, impersonality, no-mind, or temporary nondual experience for anatta.
6. Presence is Empty / Sunyata / Secondfold Emptiness	Even appearances/aggregates are empty: ungraspable, unlocatable, dependently originated.	Vivid yet dreamlike; water-moon reflections; no fixed who, where, or when; +A total exertion and -A non-arising.	Extends anatta from subject to phenomena; cuts subtle inherency in appearances, time, place and experience.	"Where is this scenery?"; dependent origination; twofold emptiness; total exertion; non-arising.	Nihilism, over-intellectualizing emptiness, or losing the vividness/radiance of appearances.
7. Presence is Spontaneously Perfected	Anatta, non-duality, emptiness and Maha/interdependence are always-already so; path and ground become indistinguishable.	Effortless, open, dynamic, ordinary life as practice-enlightenment; appearances self-liberate in their arising.	Corrects the idea that realization is a static endpoint; practice becomes condition-based, alive and ongoing.	Open, unreserved experiencing; dynamic integration in daily life; ongoing practice-enlightenment.	Treating spontaneous perfection as no-practice, original-enlightenment complacency, or final attainment.